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Blackstick Papers

By
Lady Ritchie

1909

With Portraits

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1908

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DEDICATED

TO

MARGARET RITCHIE

"*Trust that's purer than pearl*"

ASOLANDO

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The papers in the *Blackstick* series have, with two exceptions, been brought into first publication (simultaneously) in *Cornhill Magazine* and in *Putnam's Monthly*.

PORTRAITS

FACING PAGE

FELICIA HEMANS, ÆTAT THIRTY-THREE. *Frontispiece*
From a miniature.

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An early portrait from a miniature painting.

"JACOB OMNIUM" AND MARSHAL PÉLISSIER . 204
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BLACKSTICK PAPERS

No. I

HAYDN

INTRODUCTION

Readers of my father's works will be familiar with the name of the Fairy Blackstick who lived in Crim Tartary some ten or twenty thousand years ago, and who used to frequent the Court of His Majesty King Valoroso XXIV. If I have ventured to call the following desultory papers by the Fairy Blackstick's name, it is because they concern certain things in which she was interested—old books, young people, schools of practical instruction, rings, roses, sentimental affairs, etc., etc.

The writer cannot, alas! lay claim to the personal qualities for which Blackstick was so

remarkable, although she can fully appreciate the illustrious lady's serious composure, her austere presence of mind, her courageous outspokenness and orderly grasp of events. Blackstick belongs to the utilitarian school of Miss Edgeworth and Mrs. Barbauld. The lighter elegances of the Mrs. Chapones and the Laura Matildas of the day she put aside. Neither had she anything to do with your tripping, fanciful, moonlight sprites and fairies, who waste so much valuable time and strength by dancing on the green, and sitting up till cock-crow; but a wide and most interesting field of fresh interest remains, which was specially her own domain.

In the manuscripts of the "Rose and the Ring" there was originally a rival fairy introduced as a contrast to our Fairy Blackstick, whose good sense in the long run bore such excellent fruit. The bad fairy was called Fairy Hopstick. She used to wheedle, and flatter, and tell lies, and she hated the Fairy Blackstick, and could not bear to be in her company. We are told how she seemed to shrivel up and dis-

appear altogether under those sincere and searching glances.

There is a picture of Hopstick dwindling and dwindling while Blackstick watches her with a severe expression. I can still remember seeing the gold pen emphasising and darkening the lines of the shadows that brought out old Hopstick's paling and malevolent glare as she vanished in bilious spite. She had a great hook nose and hands like claws.

Whether this wicked old fairy voluntarily retired from the "Rose and the Ring," or whether my father found no pleasure in following her career I do not know, but it is certain that there is no mention of her left in the printed book. She will not be missed, and Heaven forbid that any one should have to read, or any one else have to write, a series of Hopstick Essays!

There is a pretty essay by Sainte-Beuve in which he says that he invokes the name of Madame de Sévigné at the beginning of his book as a sort of oblation or votive offering to propitiate the kindly gods; in the same spirit these little papers are placed under the

kindly tutelage of the good fairy of the "Rose and the Ring."

It seems a pity when books pass away, as they undoubtedly do, delightful books worthy to be remembered. One day everybody is reading them and living in their pages, then their voice is silent suddenly and heard no more among us; they are mysteriously shelved—forgotten—consigned to oblivion.

But sometimes as by a miracle, even after a century or two, such books are called back to existence again and raised from the dust, and their hearts seem to beat once more, and the time has come for their reincarnation. Then along with these books rise up the memories of those whom they concern and of those who wrote them. The people, about whom they are written, seem once more to haunt the earth. Dear ghosts! coming with grace and tranquil dignity, whose presence is welcome, and conveys no terror to our senses, whose influence is comforting, whose light shines from their past

into our present. The earth which contained that which was once their very essence has crumbled away, but their souls seem to reach us still, and to come with a benediction. Some who in their life belonged to the army of martyrs and who realised, too vividly for their own happiness, the jarrings and bitterness of existence, seem to speak more calmly now and with authority being dead. There is a certain measure in their passion, and their once grasp of the sting of reality and of long past emotion, seems to bring present help to others who are still learning their lesson. . . .

On the top shelf of a friend's bookcase I by chance laid my hand on a sober grey volume—nearly a hundred years old. It was born in 1817 in Albemarle Street, and Mr. John Murray stood godfather; it was christened by the familiar names of Haydn and Mozart; the handsome old book looks a little battered, a little yellow, but still spreads its good print and broad margins for our edification. Certainly for the present

writer reading in it has been a very fresh and fragrant experience, like that of gathering sweet herbs (rather than laurel and bay) out of one's garden.

The old book professes to be written by Monsieur L. A. C. Bombet, who discourses about people whom he has just seen, or who have left the world so recently that their presence seems actually felt within his chapters. The stories Monsieur Bombet tells of his friends the musicians of the day, make one long to have known these enchanting centenarians, to have lived in the warlike yet harmonious times when Lulli[1] and Rameau and Marcello and Gluck and Haydn and Mozart were winning their great victories.

Composers still win victories and write charming music, but it remains to be seen what the final result will be. I doubt whether any still among us compose their scores as in the days when we are told how Gluck had his harpsichord carried out into a flowering meadow, and placing a bottle of cham-

[1] Lulli, 1633–1687; Rameau, 1683–1764; Marcello, 1686–1739; Gluck, 1714–1787; Haydn, 1732–1809; Mozart, 1756–1791.—W. A. L.

pagne at either end, then and there devised *Che Farò* for the delight of generations to come. Monsieur Bombet, the writer of these musical notes, thus accounts for their publication.

"I was in Vienna in 1808," he says, "whence I wrote to a friend some letters respecting the celebrated Haydn, whose acquaintance an accidental occurrence had fortunately procured for me. On my return to Paris I found that my letters had acquired some celebrity, and that pains had been taken to obtain copies of them—I am thus tempted to become an author!"

It is a little puzzling when a writer who habitually writes as some one else, still further proceeds to mystify his readers. Bombet announces himself as an "inexperienced author" starting on his career; but, notwithstanding the bogus preface, he seems to have been not Bombet at all, but Beyle, better known as Stendhal, the author of many books—*Le Rouge et le Noir*, *Vittoria Accoramboni*, and that striking history the *Chartreuse de Parme* founded on the author's

early recollections of the Great Napoleon wars, and of the state of things caused by them in Italy. Bombet—Beyle—Stendhal—then finds an English translator in no less a person than the editor of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, who adds notes when he sees occasion. Then, again, looking still farther a-field, the *Biographie Générale* puts forward a new author's claims, Stendhal himself, says the dictionary, having originally translated the book from the *Haydine* of Carpani—it puts one in mind of the old nursery rhyme, "Out of England into France, out of France into Spain," etc., etc.

But the real country to which the book belongs is the country of music. Music dwells in Vienna, says the author (whoever he may be), so did Haydn. Haydn was living as an old man in a suburb of Vienna, in a house standing in the middle of a small unpaved street where the grass grew; near the barrier of Maria Hilf, on one side of the Imperial Park of Schönbrunn. There he lived, "surrounded by perpetual silence." He might, if he wished it, end his days in

the great Esterhazy Palace, but this quiet home is that of his choice. "You knock at the door," says his disciple; "it is opened to you with a cheerful smile by a worthy little old woman, the housekeeper; you ascend a short flight of stairs, and find yourself in the second chamber of a simple apartment, where a tranquil old man, sitting at a desk, is absorbed in the melancholy sentiment that life is escaping from him; he is in need of visitors to recall to him what he has once been. When he sees any one enter, his countenance recovers its animation, his voice becomes clear, he recognises his guest, and talks to him of his early years."

It is something still to hear the echo of the small details which bring the picture so vividly before us. "I have often seen Haydn," says his biographer, "when he was beating the time to his own music, unable to refrain from smiling at the approach of some passage which he was pleased with." And the writer also goes on to describe, with a gentle malice, the amateurs at the great Viennese concerts who "dex-

terously place themselves in a situation where they could see Hadyn, and regulate by his expression the amount of ecstatic applause by which they testified the extent of their raptures." From the pages of *Consuelo* to those of Bombet we may follow Haydn's steady onward steps.

His early history is well known. What does not the world still owe to that good friend the peruke-maker who took the boy home when he was expelled from St. Stephen's choir at Vienna, and for very good reasons? His voice had broken: he had mischievously cut off the tail of a comrade's gown—he was no longer wanted. These were the reasons upon which people acted then. Good Keller took him home, and after a time "spoke to him on the subject of marrying his daughter." Absorbed in his own meditations, dreaming of music, and thinking nothing about love, Haydn made no objection.

Haydn wrote his first quartet in B flat at twenty. It made a great mark at the time; all musical amateurs learned it by heart, but it did not bring him riches. He was lodging

in a house near the church of St. Michael at Vienna, and he paid for his board by giving music lessons to the landlord's two girls. In the room under Haydn's (who often had to pass his winter days in bed from want of fuel) dwelt Metastasio, the Italian poet, who also boarded in the family, and who dined every day with Haydn, and also taught him Italian. Metastasio had many powerful protectors; Haydn also found one friend not long after, in an old Count Esterhazy, in whose honour he composed a birthday symphony. This is the story as he told it himself to Bombet: "The day of the ceremony being arrived, the Prince, seated on his throne and attended by his Court, interrupted the music in the middle of the first allegro, to ask who was the author of that fine composition. Some one caused the poor young man, all trembling, to come forward. 'What,' exclaimed the Prince, 'is it this Moor's music? [Haydn's complexion gave room for this sarcasm.] Well, Moor, from henceforth you remain in my service.' Then the Prince continued, 'Go and dress

yourself like a professor; do not let me see you any more in this trim—you cut a pitiful figure; get a new coat, a wig and buckles; a collar and red heels to your shoes. Go your way and everything will be given to you.'"

Confused by the majesty which surrounded the Prince, Haydn kissed hands and retired to a corner—grieved, added he, at being obliged to lay aside his natural hair and youthful elegance. He was second Professor of Music now, but his companions always called him the Moor.

But even Haydn's birthday symphony did not keep Prince Anthony alive. When he died, however, Prince Nicholas, his successor—who was also passionately fond of music—continued a gracious protection. Every day Haydn had to compose a fresh piece of music for the Prince. About this time, when all was going well (it is like a fairy tale over and over again), Haydn was reminded by the peruke-maker that he had promised to marry his daughter Ann, and being a man of honour, he kept his word. Alas! Ann was unsuited for an artist's wife.

She was a prude, and only cared for monks and priests. We read that the poor composer's house was filled with them, and their noisy and edifying conversations interrupted his studies. To escape from his wife's reproaches he was obliged to supply all the various convents with motets and masses, for which he received no pay from the good fathers.

"Finally," says Bombet, "he separated from his wife, to whom, as far as money went, he behaved with perfect honour." Here the editor of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* adds a note, and points out that the laxity of morals which prevails among musical men is held by some to be a serious objection against the art itself. One would have liked to think of Haydn and his barber's daughter happy in a peaceful home; but they were not happy, and when there is nothing else to be said, a moral sentiment is soothing to the feelings. At least we may hope that Mrs. Haydn was fond of music, and that she found some consolation in her husband's exquisite melodies for the jars and sorrows of her domestic life.

Did Consuelo now appear upon the scene? — Who shall say? Anyhow, after parting from his wife, Haydn returned to the Esterhazy family, and for thirty years worked on unintermittingly. "Every morning he rose early, dressed himself very neatly, and placed himself at a small table by the bedside. He was the inventor of symphonies, and there he was at his greatest. When he was old he said that whenever he felt the ardour of composition declining he would turn to his Rosary. "When I was employed on the *Creation*," he said, "before I sat down to the pianoforte I prayed to God with earnestness that He would enable me to praise Him worthily."

There is a pretty account given of a visit from Lord Nelson to Haydn. Nelson, who greatly admired his music, asked Haydn for his pen, and in return gave him his own gold watch which he had many times carried into action.

When, at seventy-eight, Haydn's failing hands could no longer press the keys, he

could still hold his Rosary and his soul was lifted upwards. In May, 1809, the French were cannonading Vienna, and four bombs fell close to the little house where the old musician still dwelt. His servants ran to him in terror. He reassured them, but he was taken ill and had to be put to bed. One day he had himself raised from his couch and carried to his piano, and striking the chords with his failing hands, he sang "God preserve the Emperor" three times, then he became insensible, and expired soon after. . . .

Bombet's little book winds up in a somewhat melancholy strain. The author proceeds to moralise, as his descendants still do, and says Mozart and Haydn are the last of the great race, that the darkness of mediocrity is upon the age! Such moralisings are calculated to cheer the impartial critic coming a century or two later, and to suggest hope for those who have followed in the age of Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert, Weber, Brahms, and one other whose name I will not mention, but will leave my readers to fill in for themselves.

No. II

FELICIA FELIX

INTRODUCTION

It chanced that the proof of this little paper reached the writer as she passed in a yacht along the coast where for so many years Felicia Felix dwelt and sang her song. Some conditions should make poets of us all. From the lady[1] *who owned the s. s. "Palatine" and the captain on the upper deck, to the least experienced guest on board, the fresh beauty appealed with an irresistible charm.*

The weather was very fair after storms; young sea-gulls and guillemots were disporting themselves upon the crystal of the waters; a porpoise's back flashed in the sunlight; a far-away ship was sailing towards Cherbourg

[1] Mrs. Yatchney was Sir John Millais's name for the hospitable lady.

beyond the horizon. Near at hand rose the delicate intricate cliffs of Wales, and the rocks, bearing their crown of summer green, and their peaceful flocks and garlands, but at the same time bare and stern in their fastnesses below, and set at intervals with white fortresses.

From Southampton to Milford Bay the forts and lighthouses stand vigilant, while all the way the transparent waves dash along the shores, and the gulls' wings beat time to this beautiful natural concerto of strength and sweetness, to the "measured chime, the thundering burst," of which Mrs. Hemans herself has written, and written so well that, though her poems were not to be found on the amply stocked bookshelf in the saloon, of the five guests on board the hospitable "Palatine," four quoted with pleasure and from memory from her writings as we sat round the table in the cabin; above, the winds danced lightly over the waters, Fate at the wheel stands passionless, and the yacht speeds on its way.

It seems a long journey from Haydn's silent old age, in the grass-grown street, by the Schön-

brunn Park in Vienna, to the western coast of England and the sentimental emotional days, of L. E. L. and of Keepsakes and Mrs. Hemans, when poetry was paramount and poetesses in demand; but these are the Blackstick Papers, and we travel about as the Fairy directs us, and so from the ancient suburb where the honoured master sat waiting the end among his ever-enduring scores, we come off to the rock-bound western shores and the coasts of Wales, where the poetess, whom we have called Felicia Felix, once sat writing, and weaving her own charming spells. They are in one respect like Vivien's spells—if we are to believe Mrs. Hemans's admirers—and made up of "woven paces" and of poetry too. "Thine agile step, the lightest foot e'er seen on earth," wrote an old friend in his last days describing Felicia Hemans on her native cliffs.

Many years ago some one gave the writer a little miniature of Mrs. Hemans, by the help of which it is still quite possible to conjure up an outward semblance, and to put a shape to one's impression of the impulsive

being who paid so dearly for her happiness, her sensibility, her undoubted powers and beauty, and her charming poetical gifts. Her touching lines *To my own Portrait* may have applied to this very miniature:

> Yet look thou still serenely on,
> And if sweet friends there be
> That when my song and soul are gone
> Shall seek my form in thee,
> Tell them of one for whom 't was best
> To flee away and be at rest.

The picture represents a woman of about twenty-eight; she has dark glossy curls, delicately marked features, a high colour; her bright full sad eyes, her laughing lips, give one an impression of womanly predominance and melancholy and gaiety all at once. She wears a black dress with gigot sleeves and the jewellery of her time—the buckle, the hair chain and locket, and also a golden ornament in her dark hair. There is perhaps (but this is merest guess-work) a certain sense of limitation—shall I call it persistency?—in the general expression of the countenance. It is hard to generalise

from so slight a sketch, but perhaps something of this impulsiveness and inadaptability may have been the secret of much of the trouble of her life.

Felicia Hemans, who had been married at twenty, and who at sixteen had first known and fallen in love with Captain Hemans, at twenty-five was already parted from her husband for ever; one of her children had died, the other four boys were left to her care, and she along with them had returned to her mother's home. There are absolutely no other facts given of her domestic circumstances in the various memoirs of her by her own sister, by Mr. Henry Chorley and Mrs. Lawrence, published soon after her death, except the remarkable statement that Captain Hemans went away for change to Italy, and there remained for seventeen years, which certainly seems a very long time. We are, however, told that he occasionally wrote when necessity arose. After her mother's death Felicia Hemans offered to go out to join her husband, but to this he would not consent, and she then set to work

to make a life for herself at home, to educate her children, and to go on writing poetry, and thus add the useful prose of pounds and shillings to her own particular treasure of poetic feeling. She wrote for her children's sake, she wrote for her own art's sake too. Some of her poems have become passwords in the land. Who does not still know *Casabianca* and *The Better Land?*

Among Mrs. Hemans's friends were Wordsworth and Walter Scott, who were fond of her. Her women friends were numerous and very enthusiastic. One of them, a well-known authoress, Miss Jewsbury, writes of her: "I might describe her for ever, and never should I succeed in portraying Egeria! She was a Muse, a Grace, a variable child, a dependent woman, the Italy of human beings. . . ."

I have advisedly called my little paper *Felicia Felix*, for, though her music was sad, the musician was sweet and full of charming harmonies; it was something no doubt of her own lament that she poured out in profuse strains of most natural and

unpremeditated art. In Annuals and Forget-me-nots, in Poets' Corners, she uttered her song and relieved her heart. She was not old even when she died; and she must have enjoyed singing and pouring forth to the last. Her pretty name, her charming countenance, her luxuriant curls, and old-patterned graces, perhaps still add to the interest which belongs to her personality. The men and women of England and America were delighted with her, every one—except one person. Indeed, I have read an article in a magazine of that day in which she is compared to Desdemona, though Desdemona, as we know, only *sang* her songs, and they were not published till after her death.

To return to Mrs. Hemans, we learn that editors wrote by every post for contributions from her pen, and admirers trod on each other's heels, and packets of poetry arrived by every mail; also there came messages and compliments from America, where, if she would have consented to settle down, Felicia was offered a definite competence by a publishing firm. There is a story of a chair in

which she once sat kept sacred for years and standing apart in a gentleman's library and shown to admiring visitors.

The poetess has herself described some of her own following of "plaguing admirers," "teasing adorers," etc., etc. Her spirits would rise on occasion, and she enjoyed the moment to the full; but all the same it is very plain that the poor soul was often sad at heart, and that a bright hearthstone would have been much more to her taste than the pedestal which she had to put up with.

All this was happening in the glorious days of innocent enthusiasm, in the days of Miss Mitford and Mme. de Staël, following upon the mysterious triumphs of Hannah More. Ladies held their own then, not by main force, but by divinest right. Corinnes were plentiful, and Edgermonds still more plentiful. "Myself," Felicia Felix once wrote on the margin of the book in which she had been reading one of Corinne's passionate outbursts. And so, though she wept, she must have also often wiped away those tears,

which brought her interest and friends and occupation, and which helped to educate her boys, whose loyal affection and admiration is pretty to read of still.

"Mrs. Hemans is somewhat too poetical for my taste," said Sir Walter in 1823—"too many flowers and too little fruit; but that may be the cynical criticism of an elderly gentleman, for it is certain that when I was young I read verses with infinitely more indulgence, because with more pleasure than I can now." Sir Walter Scott's criticisms were addressed to another friendly poetess, Joanna Baillie.

Mrs. Hemans once wrote a play about the Sicilian Vespers which fell very flat in London, to the bitter disappointment of her schoolboys. It was subsequently brought out by the Siddonses in Edinburgh, and with success, greatly owing to Sir Walter's kind auspices. "I trust the piece will succeed," he wrote to Miss Baillie again in 1824, "but there is no promising, for Saunders is meanly jealous of being thought less critical than John Bull, and may perhaps

despise to be pleased with what was less fortunate in London. I wish Mrs. Hemans had been on the spot to make any alterations which the players are always demanding. I will read the drama over more carefully than I have yet done, and tell you if anything occurs. The enclosed line will show that the Siddonses are agreeable to act Mrs. Hemans's drama. When you tell the tale say nothing about me, for on no earthly consideration would I like it to be known that I interfered in theatrical matters; it brings such a torrent of applications which it is impossible to grant and often very painful to refuse. Everybody thinks they can write blank verse, and '*a word of yours to Mrs. Siddons*,' *etc.*, *etc.* I have great pleasure, however, in serving Mrs. Hemans, both on account of her own merit and your patronage."

Most old letters that are worth keeping at all speak for themselves, and it is not only by what is in them but by what is left out of them that they speak, and tell us something of the people who wrote and of the

spirit in which they wrote. The writer has been set thinking of Mrs. Hemans by a correspondence which came into her hands the other day through the kindness of Mr. Alfred Graves, who, at his uncle's death, found some letters which had passed between Mrs. Hemans and Dr. Robert Graves, her faithful friend and admirer. In this correspondence one meets with two interesting personalities—and yet it all reads more like the *echo* of a story rather than the story itself; though the manuscript lies there in the delicate even handwriting in which Dr. Graves has copied out the extracts. Most of them were afterwards published in Mr. Chorley's Life of Mrs. Hemans. The letters were edited by Dr. Graves, perhaps almost too scrupulously for our modern taste, which is interested in definite impressions and vivid details rather than in topographical generalities.

Felicia was a saddened woman, wistful, expecting more from life than life itself had to give, and looking to nature for sympathy in her troubles. Dr. Graves was a very

young man; for him too nature was beautiful, only life was happy—the waters laughed, the skies were blue. He had just completed his college career, he was entering holy orders. Mrs. Hemans must have been about seven and thirty at the time when he became tutor to her youngest son.

In all the correspondence between our poetess and her kind unchanging friend, the descriptions of scenery, the remarks upon life and literature, form the chief staple; there is little that is personal, and yet the trust and response between these two people is felt and realised and seems to reach us still. "I was happy among you all," she writes to him; "I found response for my heart and food for my mind as well." The world they saw, the friends they met, the books and the poetry they read together, all were happy signs of friendship and sympathy.

People look upon poetry from very different points of view; in this very correspondence we come upon the account of a religious-minded Irish mother standing by her daugh-

ter's death-bed and exclaiming passionately, "Oh! my child, my child, the pride of literature has destroyed you! . . ." This poor dying daughter had published some successful verses, and the religious parent could not feel her conscience reconciled to this mundane achievement.

The latter five or six years of life were spent by Mrs. Hemans in Ireland, where one of her brothers was then living, and where the Graves family, all kind good friends, were ever ready to welcome her; that one member being most specially devoted to her among them all.

There was certainly a great deal of friendship going in those days; people led more monotonous lives than they do now, and had hours to spare for it. Sentiment was more continuous, and much more a recognised condition of things than at present. Passions now have become our somewhat stagey ideals, and feeling itself has to play a sort of Dumb Crambo in order to get recognition.

When Dr. Robert Graves was eighty-five years old, the centenary of Felicia Hemans's

birth came round in the natural course of time, and his nephew has told me how the old friend, lying on his sick-bed, rallied to dictate one last poem, one last greeting to the memory of the beautiful woman who had been his Egeria, and whom all his life long he had admired and loved:

> Tresses of sunny auburn fell in ringlets
> And harmonised with thy soft hazel eyes.
> Thy height perfection, and thy springing motion
> Was as an Oread nymph's.

Everything was coming to an end, but the past and its romance was still shining far away. It is like gazing at a beautiful prospect in nature, to hear of a charming and faithful sentiment which time does not destroy in its remorseless course.

One contemporary of Felicia's was L. E. L., who must have also loved her, for when Mrs. Hemans died L. E. L. wrote a farewell poem which speaks true feeling:

> O weary one! since thou art laid
> Within thy mother's breast,
> The green, the quiet mother Earth,
> Thrice blessèd be thy rest.

Thy heart is left within our hearts,
Altho' life's pang is o'er,
But the quick tears are in my eyes,
And I can write no more.

No. III

ST. ANDREWS

A FRONTISPIECE IN BLACK AND WHITE

All across the sands, that seem to stretch farther than they ever did before, on this October afternoon the people are sprinkling in couples and companies, and spreading and strolling along by the sea with their children. The children, for once neither at work nor at play, but in their Sunday clothes, are walking demurely in happiness; the heavens are also dressed in their Sunday best, of vaporous cloud and azure and arching stillness; the birds look like specks, so high do they fly overhead. Though the sea is very far off it makes a great noise; the crisp waves thunder along the distant line in foam and whiteness. Then, to the west, the hills of Fife come breaking in

like the waves of the sea, only these land-waves take cycles instead of minutes to flow. They advance in immeasurable slowness, in exquisite curves of light, of grey, of aquamarine. As the people pass and repass, the sands are stamped with hundreds of footsteps crossing each other. One enthusiastic admirer of nature, a homely old body in shabby black, is so taken with the beauties of land and sea and heaven, that she has walked into the middle of a puddle, and there she stands rapt and happy and regardless of the usual cares of this world. A pretty little girl, in a bright green frock, conscious of new boots and light curls, stops short to stare at the enraptured woman; a little dog, seeking for companionship, suddenly leaps up against the new boots and the Sunday frock, the child starts back and runs away, the little dog, that amateur of heels, veers round and sets off boldly towards St. Andrews in search of better company. As I follow his lead, I see the light falling in crisp, defining rays across the rocks on which the town is built, and every tower, and clustering roof and gable, and weathercock, stands out distinct.

I

Not the least charm of St. Andrews—that famous Scottish shrine of education—is the fanciful contrast between the centuries. The old ruins of near a thousand years ago, with their many grim legends of fire and sword and axe, make a fine background for the youthful aspirations and good spirits of the boys and girls who belong to this present 1901. At St. Andrews, the great North Sea (to which a thousand years must seem like a drop in the ocean of time) lies sometimes blue, sometimes frothing in foam beyond the grey ruins. The inland landscapes vary with the lights as they flow along the country-side, and in October the beeches are crisp with lovely tints, and the pretty chestnut glades of Strathtyrum are aflame. The autumn sessions have begun; the schools are open not only for the babes, but for students of every age. All day long the University lads and lasses, in their quaint red gowns and trencher caps, are flitting on their way to and from the professors' lectures.

Sometimes they stand in groups, waiting with their books and papers under the great archways of the University, or you may see them coming out of the old houses and hurrying up the narrow stone alleys that lead to North Street, where the University stands firmer than either castle or cathedral.

If you walk along the old streets at certain hours on week-days, in the mornings and in the early forenoon, you might almost expect to meet the Pied Piper himself passing with long strides over the stones, in his fantastic garb and playing as he goes; so urgent and pressing are the swarms of rosy children hurrying by. They come out of the houses and down the stone flights, trotting up on their tidy little stumpy legs, pursuing one another, dressed in hoods and caps and quaint gay-coloured garments of their mothers' fashion rather than the milliner's mode; boys and girls too, from the small ages down to the very tiniest, running along in a businesslike, independent sort of way, well at home in the old streets and alleys. These small Scots, almost without exception, carry

books and copybooks or little satchels slung on their shoulders; for it is no wicked demon, but a benevolent spirit, the Pied Piper of education, that is calling them irresistibly. A distant school-bell is ringing volubly, and one may see the children disappearing one by one, as in the legend, up the steps which lead to their Parnassus. It is a charming little multitude to watch; dividing into two processions, each treading on the other's heels and hurrying to be in time; the doors open and shut again, and they pass away from our ken into the Schools.

As for the University, it was founded some six hundred years ago, in those times when kings came on horseback with their followers to pray in the now ruined choirs, bringing gifts and golden caskets and whole parishes for guerdons; in days when 400 monks walking in procession, from the Abbey up North Street, raised up a thanksgiving psalm for the opening of the University. In later palmy times the port was crowded with ships; kings, queens, and their courtiers and followings lived in the old houses round

about the great cathedral. Embassies came from foreign parts, Spanish ambassadors, Italian nuncios; Mary of Guise was welcomed as a bride; Mary Queen of Scots followed her mother as a young widow, coming to ride about and to disport herself in the fine air. She would not be plagued with business at St. Andrews, she said, and dismissed the envoys who came to trouble her fun.

After the fun came disaster, followed by silence. Only thirty years ago—so an old student has told me—grass and dandelions grew in the deserted streets which led to the great gateways of the University.

But the streets are well trodden now, the ruins stand firm upon the rocks that overhang the sea. Now it is to the muses that our philosophers pay their court; the charming ladies come from afar, not to dance and make merry, but to teach and discourse and study for themselves. As one walks along the worn stones, to-day seems crowded with other days, and yet vivid with its own original grace. Indeed the life and interest at St. Andrews are delightful to realise, and the

longer one stays there the more one learns how vivid its present is.

II

The contrast between the life of the young in the nineteenth and in the eighteenth century is certainly very striking, and one wonders how the Scotch children of former times survived their early training, or how their schoolmasters survived the training of them. From sunrise to sunset in winter, from seven in the morning to six in the evening in summer, the work of the schools used to continue. In those days, before coming to school, many of the children had to walk for miles across the moors, sometimes carrying upon their backs loads of straw to thatch the schoolhouse roof where the wet came in, or of reeds to lay upon the ground. So late as in 1677 Mr. Thomas Kirk, who travelled in Scotland, described the children doing their lessons stretched on the floor of the schools upon the mudded layers of rushes; there were no benches, no desks to write upon, there was no glass to the windows, and often

the place was filled with dense clouds of smoke from the peat fire. "It was like pigs in a stye," said Mr. Thomas Kirk.

From 1600 to 1700 the Grammar School at Glasgow met at five in the morning. On Sundays there was little relaxation; besides the long services which they had to attend, the children were expected at school no less than four times in the course of the day, to repeat by heart and to produce the notes they had taken of the heads of the discourses. Also the master used to be provided with a long pole to tap the heads of the inattentive during these discourses. I am quoting from a very interesting book lately published, *The Social Life of the Eighteenth Century in Scotland*, by H. G. Graham, in which one reads that the holidays were as short as the working hours were long—a week or fortnight's "vacance" at midsummer was about the limit; we also read that the schoolmasters were in deepest poverty—no houses were provided for them and their families. "When the teacher was married, the cares and trials of domestic life

added terribly to those of scholastic work, in one little dirty, overcrowded, unventilated, ill-lighted apartment, where blended the bawling of the master, the shrill voices of the scholars, the crying of infants. The salaries were from £5 to £10 a year at one time; then they were increased to £12, and finally, in 1782, the bitter complaint of the schoolmasters was attended to, and they were granted salaries of £15—equal to £45 in these times; also we hear of a two-roomed house and garden finally added for their benefit.

"The schoolmaster had to be a man of education, to teach Latin, mathematics, grammar; he was also expected to recite passages from Milton, to sing a psalm before an investigating body. They had their perquisites indeed—candles at Candlemas, and a penny from each scholar on the first Mondays of May, June, and July. We also learn that the Town Council of Paisley presented the head-master of the Grammar School there with half a guinea to buy a three-cornered hat as a token of respect."

Many of us will remember another description of life in 1806—home life among people of some position, taken from that delightful *Memoirs of a Highland Lady*, edited by Lady Strachey:

"Though seldom ailing, we inherited from our father a delicacy of constitution, demanding great care during our infancy. In those days it was the fashion to take none. All children alike were plunged into the coldest water, sent abroad in the worst weather, fed on the same food; our life was one long misery. . . .

"In town a large long tub stood in the kitchen court, the ice on the top of which had often to be broken before our horrid plunge into it; we were brought down from the very top of the house, four pairs of stairs, with only a cotton cloak over our night-gowns, just to chill us completely before the dreadful shock. How I screamed, begged, prayed, entreated to be saved, half the tender-hearted maids in tears beside me—all no use. . . . Nearly senseless I have been taken to the housekeeper's room, which

was always warm, to be dried. Revived by the fire, we were enabled to endure the next bit of martyrdom—an hour upon the low sofa, our books in our hands, while our cold breakfast was preparing. My stomach rejecting milk, bread and tears generally did for me."

The father (whom they devotedly loved nevertheless) eventually quelled the rebellion[1] against milk:

"In his dressing-gown, with his whip in his hand, he attended the breakfast. . . . He began with me [says the Highland Lady]. My beseeching look was answered by a sharp cut, followed by as many more as were

[1] It is perhaps scarcely fair only to quote these particular passages, when others in this same book tell of the many joys of this much-tried childhood which, hardships apart, was a happy one: "Little princes and princesses in our own land, where feudal feelings still reigned in their deep intensity, and the face of Nature was so beautiful; we had rivers and lakes and fields, moors, woods, mountains, and heather; the dark forest, the wild fruits, wild flowers, the picturesque inhabitants, legends of our forefathers, fairy tales and raids of the clans, haunted spots—all and everything that could touch the imagination there abounded, and acted as a charm on the children of the Chieftain, who was adored; for my father was the father of his people, loved for himself as well as for his name."

necessary to empty the basin. Jane obeyed at once—William after one good hint. I had an aching head, a heavy, sick, painful feeling which spoilt my whole morning, and prevented my appetite for dinner, where again we constantly met with sorrow. It often ended in a black closet, where we cried for an hour or more."

Six years later in the Highland home austerities seem still part of the education:

"In winter we rose without candle or fire or warm water; and really in the Highland winters, when the breath froze on the sheets, and the water in the jugs became cakes of ice, washing was a very cruel necessity. As we could play our scales in the dark, the two pianofortes and the harp began the day's work. How very near crying was the one whose turn set her at the harp! The strings cut the poor, cold fingers. Martyr the first sat in the dining-room at the harp; martyr the second put her blue fingers on the keys of the grand pianoforte in the drawing-room."

III

In the "Rose and the Ring" book, Fairy Blackstick expounded her views on education some ten or twenty thousand years ago. At a comparatively recent date, so lately as two thousand years ago, so we read in the Encyclopædia, work began with play, and the Greeks taught music and gymnastics only—gymnastics to make the body strong, music to cause the spirit to vibrate. And indeed, as one thinks of it, one wonders what better education has been devised since then, except that the Greeks, who did not consider women much (unless they happened to be goddesses), kept all these good things for their philosophers and their young men. But the ruling heads of the colleges of St. Andrews are more liberal, and they allow young Scotswomen to share in the lectures and examinations with their brothers. Fairy Blackstick herself might have liked to be Warden of University Hall, which has lately been opened for women, with its many windows and sunshiny rooms and corridors,

where those who have not much silver or gold may gain other possessions more to be desired at extraordinarily moderate charges. One professor of St. Andrews, a certain good Knight Hospitaller, has, among others, taken a very special interest in this fine foundation.

Besides the University and its Hall, other great schools at this seat of learning welcome the girl-students. There are the schools of St. Leonard's, overflowing, under their popular head-mistress's rule. There are the junior schools; there is the great Madras College, where Cardinal Beaton's bones lie at peace; all the foundations are flourishing and doing good work. Let us take any one of the colleges at hazard. St. Katharine, the last come of the saints of St. Andrews! The house stands within a courtyard; there are extra rooms built out behind the schoolhouse, a washhouse has been turned into a music-room, the stables are now workshops, beyond which, again, are the trim gardens where the children work in their play-hours. This head-mistress has views of her own about edu-

cation, which to her mind should not be only abstract but practical; she believes in manual occupations as well as in mental algebra, in gardening, in bookbinding, and carpentering for girls as well as boys, and all these form part of the course.

When we came in, the little workwomen were all hurrying up for their afternoon lessons, with quick pretty ways, tossing back their tawny locks, putting on their pinafores, falling to then and there without a moment wasted. All the signs of their craft were ranged about the long room—tables (green as educated tables are nowadays), there were also rush-bottomed chairs, we could see the bookcases growing under their fingers. The bookbinders had a mistress to themselves, and were learning the woven secrets which lie hidden behind all smooth book-boards and leathern backs. Some of these little girls were binding up Shakespeare's sonnets.

They loved the work—one could see it in their faces, and their hands, the very way they flung back their long curls and slipped

into their pinafores shows their pleasure and interest.

St. Katharine's is for junior students, from eight to fourteen years, who are considered too young for St. Leonard's; some come from India, there are some whose parents have to live abroad, and who like to send their little ones to this wholesome air, this liberal original teaching. The doctrine taught is not very complicated—"geography and obedience would embrace most things," says the head-mistress, Miss Gray.[1] She let us watch the little artificers for a time, then she led the way to another part of the school, crossing the big garden with the many little gardens along the wall, mounting a staircase which leads to a gallery in a big hall, where a piano was sounding and some thirty or forty little pupils were learning to dance; and immediately the article in the Encyclopædia about gymnastics and music came into my mind.

What is a more charming sight than happi-

[1] Now head-mistress of St. Paul's School for Girls at Brook Green.

ness? This was happiness to music, with youthful skirts, locks, and limbs flying, and a beating time and tune, and a waving of arms, and a flitting of maidens, driven by the ruling piano, music was lord of all for the moment. The little girls had brought balls, which they threw up in the air and caught again to the dance-tunes; they advanced from the far end of a long hall; they parted, divided, mingled once more, with a most sweet natural gleam and zest, eyes and hands and feet all alert and dexterously keeping to the measure, whilst the dancing mistress passed up and down ordering the mazes as she went, and every combination came true and seemed to be a part of the music.

I heard of a little boy the other day who objected to visiting his first school, although warmly invited to do so. It *smells* of lessons, he said gloomily. Little girls will not talk in this way of their school-days at St. Andrews.

No. IV

CONCERNING JOSEPH JOACHIM

Before life was experience—when it was curiosity, hope, speculation, all those desires with which existence begins—the writer was sent by her father to some musical meetings, which are now so long over that the very rooms in which they first originated do not exist any more. They were Willis's Rooms, out of St. James's Street. The Musical Union was the name given to the concerts, which were an admirable invention of Mr. Ella's to try to raise the standard of music from certain shallow depths to which it seemed to be gradually drifting. There used to be an encouraging picture of a lyre on the programme, and a pretty little sentence —"Il più gran omaggio alla musica sta nel silenzio"—printed in coloured letters at the

end of it. This, alas! is not yet the universal opinion; promiscuous clap-trap applause and boisterous encores, often before the last notes have died away, being still in fashion.

I believe the Musical Union eventually migrated to St. James's Hall, but it was in Willis's cool and stately halls, with the faded velvet seats, that the writer for the first time heard those familiar and delightful strains of Joachim's violin, which have so happily sounded on through the latter half of a century of change and perplexity, ever bringing truth and strength and tranquillity along with them.

For those of us who are not blessed with the Fairy Blackstick's length of life and her five-and-twenty thousand years or so of active interest, it is no little good fortune to have lived in our generation, alongside the people whom we can understand more or less; who express what is best in us, and who have added so widely to our limited experience, just because we *can* sympathise with them and follow their well-loved lead. One is sorry for those who are born too late

or too soon for their journey through life —who are fighting against the tide instead of going along with it—or perhaps trying to stem the unknown ways alone, ahead of their natural companions. And so I repeat it is an inestimable privilege to have lived at the same time with certain expressions of consummate beauty, which contain the best ideals, the best realisations of which we are capable; and it has been the present writer's fortune to be able to count upon more than one certain and unfailing music through life—noble guiding strains which have led the way along many chances and changes, only growing more familiar, more loved as time has passed on. It is quite certain that people are not made happy by remembering *tours de force* or wonderful exploits in execution—indeed some of us are even too ignorant to appreciate them—but mere listeners, ignorant though they may be, are certainly made happier (and better so far as they are more happy) by the remembrance of an unfailing flow of beauty, sometimes quite beyond description, one of the revela-

tions upon earth of some law reaching far beyond it.

All this has been specially brought home to the writer by a book which has lately appeared, an English version of Andreas Moser's *Life of Joseph Joachim*, now translated by Lilla Durham. It will be found full of interesting things to those who can go back for years to the revelations of this master's noble art. In this satisfying history both the writer and the translator seem touched by something of Dr. Joachim's own sincerity and thoroughness. The first sentence of Mr. Fuller Maitland's introduction strikes the keynote of it all: "Few biographers," he says, "have had to tell the story of a life so full of dignity, usefulness, and beauty." The story flows on from the very first with steady advance.

Blackstick herself might have presided at Joachim's birth. We read of the usual fairy seventh child, the son of Julius and Fanny Joachim, born near Presburg in Hungary in 1831; of the grave, reserved father, devoted to his home; of the loving, capable mother;

of the family in modest circumstances, not rich people, but placed beyond the struggle for daily bread. We do not learn that this was in any way a specially musical family; but one of the sisters, called Regina, could sing, and little Pepi could listen, and with all his might.

The writer has heard Dr. Joachim say that he first learnt to play on a little toy fiddle, which some one brought him from a fair. Happy friend to have given such a gift to such a "Pepi"! The little fiddle is written of in the memoir, and we read that a friend of the family first taught the child to play upon it; then the father, recognising Pepi's great natural gifts, determined to have him seriously taught the violin, and, being a sensible man, took him to the best violinist in all Pesth. He was Serwaczynski, Konzertmeister there, and we have his portrait in the book, an anxious-looking man in a black satin stock and an old-fashioned coat with a high collar. There is also a picture of little Joseph himself, with rows of beautiful stiff curls, and, notwithstanding his tender years,

the same calm expression that we are accustomed to. A pretty story is told how, after thirty years, Joachim somewhere recognised the tones of his first master's violin which he had heard as a child, and was able to buy it for his own. It was an Amati and a valuable instrument.

At the opera at Pesth very good music was to be heard. Beethoven's *Ruinen von Athen* was given there, and the overture to *König Stephan*. It was at Pesth, in the Casino, that Pepi made his first appearance, by his master's wish. The picture of the little fair-haired boy, with his stiff curls, was taken at this time, and the delighted audience seems to have applauded as loudly sixty years ago as it does to-day. Dr. Joachim's only recollection, however, is of the sky-blue coat and the mother-of-pearl buttons which he wore for the occasion. A delightful spirited lady now appears upon the scene; this is a relative, Fräulein Fanny Figdor, who entreats that her charming little cousin Pepi should be sent to Vienna, where music is more vibrating and alive than at sleepy Pesth—

she is like a character out of Goethe, so confident and full of resource and conviction. Her persuasions and those of his teacher prevail, and the father and Fanny and Pepi all set out together for the capital.

The first master to whom they applied was Helmesberger, a distinguished teacher, whose two young sons were also admirable performers. He declared that nothing could ever be made of little Joachim because of the stiffness of his bowing. Joachim's father, who hated half measures, though bitterly disappointed, at once resolved to take his boy away and bring him up to some other profession. Happily for the whole world, Ernst happened to come to Vienna about this time, and immediately recognised Joachim's rare gifts; he advised the parents to continue his musical education, and to put Pepi under Joseph Böhm, from whom he himself had learned wisdom and music.

This kind, austere teacher took Joachim to his own home and treated him as a son. He had no children, but he loved his pupil and he loved true art.

At the time when Joachim first went to Vienna, the great traditions of the past were somewhat waning. Beethoven and Schubert had been dead some twelve years; the cheerful and homely melodies of slighter composers were better suited to display the brilliant gifts of those who rather wished to show their capabilities than to play great music. Paris was supposed to be the centre of all art and of all success, and there was consequently some talk of sending Joachim after his studies with Böhm, to Paris. Again the spirited Fanny, now Frau Witgenstein, with a home and husband of her own in Leipzig, interfered for Joseph's benefit. She declared that Leipzig was the only place for Joachim, and the only school where he had anything to learn.

Mendelssohn was at Leipzig, the director of the concerts there, and he brought many musicians round about him, he was successful and popular, respected and greatly loved. Moser says that among others "Robert Schumann looked up to Mendelssohn as to a high mountain." Some master-pen,

a Carlyle's, a Jean Paul's, should paint for us this charming centre, all these delightful people, coming and going in the streets of the ancient town, and dwelling in their special atmosphere of music, of good fellowship, of high endeavour.

Mendelssohn was greatly interested in the young student. His first recommendation was that Joachim should have a tutor, not for the violin—in his art the boy wanted but little teaching—but for Latin, for geography, for history, for divinity, for all the education befitting a superior man; but at the same time Félicien David, the great violinist, who was then at Leipzig, gave Joachim many hints which he afterwards knew how to make useful.

What, notwithstanding every drawback, would not any of us now give for a ticket of admission to that concert at the Gewandthaus where Joachim made his first public appearance in Leipzig! The concert was given by Madame Pauline Viardot, who sang, while Schumann stood behind the hall listening to the performance. Madame Schumann

and Mendelssohn played together on two pianofortes one of Schumann's compositions; Mendelssohn accompanied Joachim, but, unfortunately, just at the beginning of this piece Joachim's string snapped, owing to the heat of the room. They had no sooner started once more when there was an alarm of fire, and the whole company rushed out of the place.

Joachim was six years in Leipzig. Mendelssohn's constant advice to his pupil was to never play anything but the best music conscientiously, with more thought for the composition than for the effect which was produced. Young as he was, Joachim had his own standard; he responded to Mendelssohn's serious views, he did not care for virtuosity, and from what he had heard rather shrank from an introduction to Liszt. It is interesting to read of Mendelssohn's reply to Joseph when he expressed this feeling. "Wait a bit, my son; there is so much that is unusual and beautiful in his playing, that I feel sure you will return converted. God speed you. Greet Liszt from

me." And Mendelssohn was right in his prediction.

When Mendelssohn died suddenly, in 1847, the whole musical world mourned for Lycidas. To Joachim it was a deeper personal sorrow, one of the keenest he ever experienced.

There is always something satisfying in the thought of past and present friendship between people who are one's friends in spirit—it is only an accident whether one knows them or not in person. The friendship between Joachim and Mendelssohn is as delightful to think of as that between Jonathan and David. It is always a sort of music to hear of true friends. Can one not imagine these two as they come walking together in the evening, and the boy Joachim answers Mendelssohn's charming talk with intelligent apprehension and caps a quotation from Jean Paul with the apt application of a passage from his *Flegeljahre?* Mendelssohn looked at him with surprise, and from that evening we are told his interest in the *Teufelsbraten*, as he called him, turned into the greatest affection. He agreed with Schu-

mann, "He only placed in the first rank artists who could not only play, possibly one or two instruments, but who were also human enough to understand the writings of Shakespeare and Jean Paul."

Only a night ago, in a friend's house in Eaton Place, the writer heard M. Coquelin—great master in another art—describing all the difference he felt between playing the living thoughts of genius, such as Molière's and Shakespeare's, and forcing himself to express the still-born fancies and fashions of the hour.

When Joachim first came to England, in 1844 (his second visit, when I first heard him, was in the 'fifties), Mendelssohn wrote to the secretary of the Hanoverian Embassy: "These few lines are to introduce Joseph Joachim, from Hungary, a boy of fifteen, of whom I have become exceedingly fond during the nine months I have known him; indeed I really love him and think very highly of him, a thing I can say of few of my recent acquaintances. . . . His interpretation, his perfect comprehension of music, *and the*

promise in him of a noble service to art [is not this finely said?] will, I am sure, lead you to think of him as highly as I do. . . . Be kind to him, look after him in great London, introduce him to those of our friends who will appreciate such an exceptional personality, and in whose acquaintance he for his part will also find pleasure and stimulation; I here allude principally to the Horsleys."

This letter of Mendelssohn's recalls to the writer's mind an unforgettable meeting with Joachim many years after, when on a misty afternoon, with a young cousin, a friend of Miss Horsley's, she went to inquire for Mrs. Horsley, the mother of the family, who was dangerously ill in her house on Campden Hill. There was a garden in front of the house, and the door opened as we came up, and then some one who had been watching from the window ran out quickly from within, passing the maid who had come to the door, and saying: "I saw you crossing the garden. Come in, come, both of you. Come quietly; my mother is very, very ill. But Joachim is here, he has come to play to her; she

wanted to hear him once more. . . ." In a dim, curtained back room looking across another garden the dying mistress of the house sat propped up with cushions in a chair. Joachim stood with his back to the window, holding his violin, and we waited in silence by the doorway while he played gravely and with exquisite beauty. The sad solemn room was full of the blessing of Bach, coming like a gospel to the sufferer in need of rest.

Mrs. Horsley only lived for a few days after this, and now her daughter has followed her, that charming, gracious, emphatic, grey-haired Sophy, bestowing kindness and help and music upon all in her path. She had been the intimate friend of Mendelssohn, who dedicated one of his most lovely compositions to her. She treasured his portrait and his drawings; we almost seemed to see him there when she spoke of him to us.

Weimar, that wonderful little Olympus where so many gods have congregated, seems to have an instinct for great men, and was

the first that offered to Joachim official recognition. The sketch of Weimar and its musical politics and vehement partisanship is well given in Dr. Moser's book, its discussions and enthusiasms, the battles of the new and the old school, under the rule of Liszt, the arbiter of these passionate strifes. Liszt himself belonged to the school of those who would weave impulse and passion into their art rather than beauty, order, and self-suppression. Anyhow, he was the irresistible and brilliant leader and advocate of the new school of music. Raff and Bülow were also at Weimar studying under the great Kapellmeister. Joachim, who was now appointed Konzertmeister, was for a time, as Moser tells us, "completely conquered by the magic spell of the new characteristic music." He took immense pains to raise the standard of the Weimar orchestra, and, together with his friends, constantly gave and conscientiously rehearsed Wagner's music. Bülow, we are told, was delighted to have won Joachim over, as he thought, to the magician's influence, for Joachim himself was

regarded as only next to Liszt at Weimar in importance and power.

One day came a letter from Richard Wagner to Liszt, which is given by Moser: "I have just been reading the score of my *Lohengrin*—as a rule I do not read my own work. I have an intense longing that this work should be performed. I hereby beseech you, perform my *Lohengrin*. You are the only man to whom I would make this request; to no one but you do I trust the making of this opera."

I have read somewhere of the circumstances under which this letter was written. It was in Paris, after his great disappointments there, that one day sitting in his room, lonely, despondent, poor, numbed, as he said pathetically, not knowing where to turn, to find rendering for that which was his creation, Wagner's eyes happened to fall upon the score of *Lohengrin* lying neglected on a shelf. Suddenly an immense pity came over him, a pity to think of that beautiful music buried for ever in a sepulchre of paper and fruitless hope. It was

under this influence that he wrote, and almost by return of post he heard from Liszt that *Lohengrin* was to live and to be produced to the best of their ability by the musicians on the Weimar stage.

There is one happy idyllic interlude which must not be passed over in the story of Joseph Joachim's life—the coming to Weimar of Bettina, Goethe's child-friend, now a mother with charming grown-up daughters. To her rooms, day after day, come the young, happy musicians; they sing, they make melody, they wander by moonlight, they make love—at least Grimm makes love and eventually marries the attractive Gisela. On the last night they all sit up till three in the morning to see the ladies off by the earliest train.

Sterner times followed upon all this happiness and gaiety. Joachim was appointed to Hanover as Konzertmeister, while Liszt was still ruling at Weimar and bringing the "new school" more and more to the front. He was performing his own and Wagner's compositions almost exclusively; and not only this, but he was preaching a somewhat

arrogant doctrine, and declaring that both conductor and performers must possess a certain power of enthusiastic *divination* for the proper performance of his works! Then it was that Joachim made a protest, notwithstanding the cost it was to his loyal and responsive nature. But he had to speak the truth and without reserve. "I am quite impervious to your music," he writes, in a memorable letter to Liszt; "it contradicts everything in the works of our great masters on which my mind has been nurtured since the days of my early youth. . . . I cannot be a helpmate to you, and I must no longer let it appear that I serve the cause that you and your disciples advocate."

Rubinstein compared Joachim in his youth to a novice in a convent who knows he can choose between the convent and the world, and who has not yet taken his part. We know which part in life Joseph Joachim has always preferred.

When the writer first personally knew Dr. Joachim, it was in her father's house at Palace Green. She can remember seeing

him coming in one rainy afternoon in spring-time, and entering the long light-blue drawing-room. He was a young man then. He was carrying a rolled-up scroll—it was an original score of Beethoven's which some one had just given him; he showed us the cramped, fierce writing, the angry-looking notes of those calm harmonies. I have never again seen a Beethoven MS.; but the remembrance is distinct of that one, as well as of Joachim's talk of Beethoven himself, of his mighty self and his protesting nerves, and his impossible difficulties with housekeepers and maids-of-all-work. I have sometimes heard Joachim speak of Schumann with the gentlest affection and reverence, and then of Brahms—above all of Brahms, and of his first meeting with him, as one of the greatest emotions of his life.

We had once the happy opportunity of hearing the Joachim quartet at Dresden. It seemed to me then, as now it seems to me when I remember it, that I had never heard music before: so beautiful, so exquisite did it sound in that dark, bare Ge-

wandthaus by the Elbe. It may be a foolish fancy, but to the writer's mind music never sounds so well as when there is flowing water within reach—whether it is best for those who listen by the Rhine at Bonn or by the Elbe at Dresden matters little; or are we writing of a romance of Schumann's, a concerto of Mozart's, that were sounding but a few days ago in an old Chelsea house? Joachim was not there personally, but it was his teaching and inspiration that called forth the harmony by the theatre. One of his most faithful followers was sitting at her piano; his friend and pupil, Mrs. Liddell, had brought her violin. To the writer, hurrying home afterwards with happy pulses, the very mists of winter seemed to bear the beautiful strains along with them, and the tides of the stream to repeat it.

But perhaps of all places the Hochschule at Berlin is the place in which one likes best to remember Dr. Joachim, and to think of him in the midst of his young pupils, as they sit in serried rows in the concert-room. It is a sight to satisfy the touched spectator,

for so much that is personal goes into music that to watch the master gravely facing the pupils, and that vast young assembly eagerly attentive and following his guiding hand and glance, seems a revelation to the music itself. Many of the scholars are scarcely more than children, but they play as if they were men and women grown, and they answer in a moment to his sign. Some especial bar or cadence does not go rightly; he makes them repeat it again and again; suddenly, with a flash along the line, they understand correctly, and then the music goes on once more. It was Beethoven's great concerto for the violin that they were playing when we were there. A few parents and friends sit listening, a daughter of Mendelssohn's among them. As the countless bows sweep up and down, an up-springing wave of swelling sound spreads from one end to the other of the great hall. The young, serious musicians bring the movement triumphantly to its close; the master looks approving; then comes a moment's pause. "Miss Leonora Jackson will play the solo," he says, and a girl of

sixteen, in a straw hat, with a long plait of hair, steps quickly forward, lays her straw hat upon a chair, tosses back her fair hair, and begins to play.

It was a child playing to the others, a child with perfect taste and sure handling; the young orchestra listened and approved, and when she finished burst into gay, delightful applause. The master joined, too, clapping his two hands. It was a happy moment for everybody. . . .

This Hochschule, as we know, was perhaps Joachim's greatest interest in life, and to it we owe the spread of his wise and beautiful teaching.

NO. V

EGERIA IN BRIGHTON

I

It is curious to see how quickly people and generations change their fashions. Wits, bricks, and bonnets alike whirl in every direction, shoot out loops or pinnacles, then suddenly collapse. Just now our cities, as well as our clothes and our impressions, belong to every age and country, passing with bewildering rapidity from Grecian to Gothic, from Chinese pagodas to Byzantine mosaic, to Decadence, to Renaissance, to Swiss cottages, or what not. Caves and Stonehenges may be the next fashion, for all I know. Perhaps Brighton is more than any other place an example of this indescribable jumble of rapid fancies, except that the sea-line re-

mains fortunately unchanged, whatever may be happening on shore. And yet, with all the ugliness of the huge hotels rearing their pretentious fronts, of the houses that are turned out—and all their contents—by the hundred dozen, there is a certain magnificence in the long line of human habitation coasting the great sea; lit by the morning gleams and by the sunsets, and then later on by the moon and the stars, and by the thousand lights of different radiance, which shine up as the daylight goes out. There is a certain individuality in the breath of Brighton air, as well as in its busy streets, where so much of the pretty homely past remains, notwithstanding all that has been added to it; from the Oriental fashions of the Regency to the Cubitt taste of the early Victorian times which succeeded to the all-conquering flourishes of the eighteenth century. These flourishes, for the present, we have unanimously consented to ignore in our advancing culture, just as Catherine Morland rejected the whole city of Bath; and the writer feels that it requires no little

courage nowadays to confess that sometimes in the evening when the light is clear, and the hundred spires and domes and pinnacles of the Pavilion rise in a multitude upon the sky, a certain glamour has fallen upon her soul, and she has looked up and almost expected to hear the cries of the Moslem watchmen calling upon the faithful from the minarets.

An adventurous traveller who got as far as Brighton in 1821 has left an account of the Pavilion, which at that period nobody need have blushed for admiring with all the rest of the world. To quote Dr. Evans at length would be impossible, but a few sentences will perhaps suffice to give a general impression of the style of his day. It is the inside of things rather than the outside that he deals with. "The aerial imagery of fancy, the embellishments of fertile invention, profusely described in the *Thousand and One Nights*, the popular tales of magic involving the enchanted palaces of *the Genii*," he says, writing of the Pavilion, "fall short in splendour of detail to this scene of imposing

grandeur, to these beautiful combinations and effects of myriads of glittering objects, in the plenitude of art and refinement of taste. . . ."

Any one of us who may have lately attended a concert at the Pavilion will hardly recognise the following account of the music-room: "A dome gilt with green and gold and ornamented with sparkling scales, and sunflowers which diminish in size to the centre; from which centre (among other things) hangs an ornament representing in all its vivid tints a sunflower, in all the luxuriance of seeming cultivation; from which ornament again a glittering pagoda of cut glass depends, also a water-lily surrounded by golden dragons and enriched by various transparent devices, all emanating from the heathen mythology of the Chinese. . . . The dome itself," so we read, "appears to have been excavated from a rock of solid gold; it is supported by a convex cone, intersecting itself by an octagonal base." The mind of the reader is further dazzled by long descriptions of columns of crimson, enormous

serpents twisted in their diversity of colour and terrific expression, . . . blue and yellow fretwork, rows of bamboo confined by ribbons, canopies, suspended lamps, marble statuary by Westmacott ornamented with ormolu columns, and finally an "effulgent mirror encompassed by a glittering canopy." "This scene of radiant and imposing splendour," we are told, "imparts the highest credit to the professional talents of F. Crace, Esq., and his qualified assistants." The banqueting-hall is described at equal length. "A *tout-ensemble* of matchless beauty, rendering words inadequate to do it justice, exhibiting grandeur without tawdriness, good taste as emanating from intellectual cultivation; and all this the work of F. Jones, Esq.," who seems to have run a dead heat with F. Crace, Esq., and his qualified assistants.

Mrs. Barbauld, dear woman, has been called in to add poetry to this passionate prose:

> And, lo! where Cæsar saw with proud disdain
> The wattled hut and skin of azure stain,

Corinthian columns rear their graceful forms,
And light verandas brave the wintry storms,
etc. etc. etc.

II

When the writer's father used to start off for Brighton with his inkstand and his blotting-pad and his gold pen, it was always known that he meant play as well as work. He loved his work and his play at Brighton and the playfellows he met there. She can remember him standing with John Leech one sunshiny morning at the window of a little ground-floor room looking towards the sea, and watching the stream of people as they flowed along the Parade. My father may have seen Miss Crawley in her chair and Rawdon Crawley and Becky herself tripping attendance; and no doubt John Leech saw dear Mr. Briggs and his smiling family, and the little Scotch terriers, and those majestic whiskered beings and those ladies with the funny little square boots, and the flowing ringlets blowing in the wind. . . . I can just remember the two friends laughing and

talking together as they stood in the window, when a droll-looking volunteer went by.

I have often tried to make out the little lodging-house, but I dare say it is gone, and the Métropole or the Grand Hotel or some majestic emporium is in the place where it stood.

Of an evening, from our present windows in Bedford Square, if we look we can see a fairy-like illumination flashing out to sea—a glittering stream of lights in bright arcades, and running from end to end of an endless pier, where music plays, and where the inhabitants of Brighton disport themselves when their day's work is over. Alas! perhaps some of us still prefer the memory of the old chain-pier to the presence of all these dazzling "improvements"—the old pier, which stood firm for so many years, while the waves flung their spray against its shiplike spars, all hung with seaweeds and tenanted by barnacles enjoying the sweet salt darkness underneath. Up above, the old pier used to be haunted by seafaring men and their fishwives. One of these mer-women, who remembered my father —has he not written of the old chain-pier in

William Makepeace Thackeray

an early portrait, from a miniature painting

Philip?—kept her stall to the end, till the last great storm came to sweep the old sea-mark away. It was indeed a haven for memories: Helen Faucit loved it, and used to pace there with her husband; my father used to sit there smoking, so his old friend the fishwife told me.

Miss Fanny Macaulay, who dwelt at Brighton, once said to me, "People think I am lonely here! Why, the room is simply crowded with the thoughts of those I have loved," and so this garish strand seems to be to some of us. Beyond the pier, higher up on the east cliff, there is a house neither romantic to look at nor marked in any way, but as I pass I think of my father's good friend and ours, his publisher, now gone from us, who owned it once long ago; and I remember how we came there after my father's death to find that friendship which has never changed—and the legacy which true hearts leave, in turn, to their children's children. . . .

Another of my father's old playmates at Brighton, until quite lately, still sat in her chair by her fireside, not far from "Horizontal Place," with her own memories of the spot

where she has welcomed so many, and made them happy by her wit and kindness. Her father, Horace Smith, dwelt at Brighton too, and his name links us with all the great literary names of the beginning of the last century. He and his brother James knew all the interesting persons of whom they wrote in the *Rejected Addresses*.

Brighton has scarcely received its due recognition of late. Miss Crawley and Becky Sharp and Miss Honeyman and Lady Anne Newcome, of course, are all old-established residents and patrons; but since the days of *Vanity Fair* and *The Newcomes* I can hardly remember any mention of Brighton in contemporaneous literature.

I feel rather jealous for Brighton! Neither Dickens nor Bulwer nor Disraeli nor Scott nor George Eliot nor Kingsley ever sent any heroes and heroines to revive there. Miss Austen writes of the comparative merits of Southend and Cromer, lingers foundly at Lyme, or in the Pump Room at Bath, but ignores Brighthelmstone, as it must have been still called in her day. Mrs. Oliphant goes to St. Andrews and

the Firth of Forth; Black floats from northern sea to northern sea; Mrs. Gaskell paints Whitby; Kingsley loves Clovelly. Brighton is ignored by an ungrateful generation of heroes and heroines. They are, of course, a fastidious race. They like to break their hearts in style, in beautiful parks or in lonely crumbling mansions—not in packed lodging terraces with neighbours by the dozen and Bath-chairmen for an audience. They prefer solitude, the midland counties, Scotland, the Lakes, the Orkneys, the Isle of Man. Brighton has certainly nothing so delightful to produce as that enchanting boat-house to which Peggotty took David Copperfield at Yarmouth, but many a Bleak House might be pointed out; and as for splendour, Disraeli himself might not have disdained the glories of the Pavilion, as described by my friend and predecessor, Dr. Evans.

III

But the Fairy Blackstick does not greatly concern herself with Brighton as it is, nor even

with its reminiscences, though they comprise kings, courts, favourites, and the Duke of Wellington himself. Its adjacent dependency of Roedean interests her very much more.

As she is too old to fear being sent to school again herself, my tutelary Fairy Blackstick enjoys nothing so much as visiting the various seats of youthful learning and education which are scattered about the country. We have just described her experiences at St. Andrews. There is also this fine institution for the benefit of youth upon the Sussex downs of Roedean, near Brighton, of which the life and the spirit seem no less invigorating and reviving to our ancient doctrinaire.

Education, exhausted by her long efforts, may have nodded off, as the Sleeping Beauty did, towards the end of the eighteenth century, under the spells of the droning wheels of Mrs. Chapone, Hannah More, and Mrs. Trimmer. Then the great revival occurred, and Rousseau and the Edgeworths and others stepped forward to shake up the sleeping Princess of Education. Princess! Princesses would be more to the point. They do not any longer

belong to any special time or place. Wherever one turns one sees them rubbing their beautiful eyes. They are in the north, and on the southern cliffs; they are in the old collegiate cities, in London and in its suburbs, among green-enclosing groves. All these Sleeping Beauties may have lain dormant for a time; but lo! they start up with wide-open eyes when that charming prince, Enthusiasm, calls them from their slumbers with a kiss.

Fairy Blackstick offered to conduct us to the adjacent seat of education in her chariot, and we gladly accepted her offer. The mists were lying on the hills as we drove along the sea-coast, leaving the crowds behind us; it was Saturday, and all along the bare cliffs the holiday-makers were streaming and following each other. The mists were light and vaporous, drifting over the bare fields and cliffs, or floating upon the horizon of the sea in an indescribable fresh sweetness. The half-holiday schoolboys were out at their sports, and parties of schoolgirls from Roedean were also out, flying hither and thither, playing hockey on the downs in their dark-blue

uniforms. The line of the cliffs spread wider as we climbed: we could see the footpaths running across the hollows towards Ovingdean and Rottingdean, and the cabbage-fields on the slopes, and a scattered house or two, all gently touched and softened by the haze; and every now and then, where the veils were torn, the sea came swimming before our eyes in pools and vast lakes enclosed by vapours.

Some little way off, also tempered by a silvery veil, rose a huge pile of buildings, like any one of those bastions one may have sometimes seen in Austria or Germany—some Moravian settlement perhaps, standing on its cliff, with belfries and clock towers and windows upon windows. These windows, which outside seem too many for architectural effect, inside give light and air to two hundred maidens, asleep and awake.

The particular Sleeping Princess of Education who came to life in this charming spot certainly found herself in delightful surroundings when she opened her eyes upon this horizon, upon the flights and terraces and courts all looking seawards; while within, the

great halls, the schoolrooms and laboratories, the gymnasiums and passages, lead from wing to wing, and—thanks to the innumerable windows—from cheerful light to light.[1]

Every corner of the great building speaks of sunshine and freshness. And besides all this there is the inspiriting sight of the spreading sea-line to the south, and of the downs stretching north and east, and then, far away towards the sunset, Brighton with its spires and pinnacles. Sometimes the sea from Roedean looks almost like a living thing, heaving and throbbing, and with dark markings and a strange dazzle of white flame breaking from the far horizon. On this particular day of which I write it was vague, soft, mystical, with spring in the air and birds on the wing.

I have always liked the story of Roedean—of the seven sisters who founded the schools and raised the beautiful palace in which this particular Princess of Education awoke. After long years of constancy and work, with

[1] There are four great houses, all communicating, each under a different regent. Each house contains about fifty girls and has its separate staff of mistresses and servants.

hope and good sense and a company to back them, they raised the palace for this Princess Egeria, so I shall call her, to rule, with her following of English girls. "Egeria was a prophetic nymph or divinity," says the dictionary, "an instructress invoked as the giver of life." All of which is extremely appropriate to the schools of Roedean. The air comes straight from the waves to the high cliffs where the two hundred maidens are imbibing instruction and fresh air with every breath.

I had heard at St. Andrews, first of all, how much the young students of to-day owe to Mrs. Garrett Anderson, who came away in her youth, fresh from Cambridge honours, with new and healthy views of what education ought to be, not only for the mind but for the body, and who immediately began to preach the excellent doctrines of judicious hours, of exercise, of oxygen and hydrogen, the uses of amusement as well as of hard work; of thoroughness and good teaching. And with what success she preached any one may judge who looks

about, with or without the guidance of my tutelary Fairy Blackstick.

Schools founded upon such lines prosper because they are schools of common sense; the children's happy health is considered as well as their vigorous mental progress.

"It is just tea-time," said Egeria, who had come out to welcome the Fairy Blackstick; "come and see the girls," and she led the way. It was pleasant to follow her and also to realise the young students talking, drinking tea, occupied by their various amusements; in libraries, gymnasiums, play-rooms; being Saturday afternoon the school-rooms only were empty.

"There is but one question I should like to ask you," said Fairy Blackstick, a little gravely—she was pulling down her veil and preparing to take leave: "When your girls come away, returning to their own homes, to the outer world where most assuredly everything is not arranged solely for their convenience, are you not a little afraid for them?"

"Afraid of *what?*" said Egeria.

"Of their too great expectations," said Blackstick, "and consequent disappointment."

We were crossing the courtyard as she spoke, and we happened to be passing an open window whence came a sudden delightful burst of laughter from some half-dozen maidens who were sitting round a table drinking tea. It was merry, charming laughter like a tune. "*That*," said Egeria, smiling, "is as good an answer as any I can give you. Youth is light-hearted; it accepts the experiences of life as they come, not the less easily because of a good education! You take things too gravely, dear Blackstick." And then we drove down the hill towards Brighton once more, while Egeria waved farewell from her high terrace.

No. VI

NOHANT IN 1874

FRONTISPIECE

FONTAINEBLEAU, *June* 1, 1901.

It seems a charming natural accompaniment to George Sand's books and letters to be reading them among the very scenes she describes, to the pleasant echo of the friendly French voices. We find a gentle, merry people here at our country restaurant, spending their Sundays under the trees—not wanting anything but a little sunshine to quicken them into gaiety. The inn stands between the forest and the river. Birds and insects are flying, winds stir the leaves, fishes leap from the water, the great stream flows past carrying its rafts, its steady cargo. People sit in the shade watching the currents as they run towards the bridge, and past the woodyard where

the children are at play. On the opposite banks are wide green meadows sprinkled with old farms and ancient dovecotes and clumps of tall trees.

Our hostel is at the entrance of the great forest of Fontainebleau, and stands at the gates of its vast cathedral with cloisters and columns of Ionic beeches and Doric pines, and a choir of sweet birds still singing; the incense rises from a thousand aromas, and there is a mosaic underfoot of dry leaves and fragrant cones and twigs and fine grass.

All sorts of people stop at the welcoming courtyard of the little restaurant—workmen, country people, as well as the smart folks from the town. Various attractive notices are painted up upon the walls of the old house, "Friture," "Matelottes," and so forth. Soldiers straggle in, babies arrive by omnibus with a nurse in charge —parents follow, exhausted from long expeditions on bicycles. They embrace their children and call for lemonade. These are inhabitants of Fontainebleau, for the most part, and the officers with their wives from the great military academy there. Then more soldiers come up; a party of them arrives in a boat, rowing

atrociously and roaring with laughter; as they land they salute their domestic commanding officers and pass on to the outer kitchen of the inn, where a sort of second table is spread.

Louise and Marie, who wait upon thirty people at once, fly hither and thither with flying white streamers, and then, at an emergency perhaps, comes his honour the host from the house, followed by his man in shirt-sleeves, carrying innumerable bottles of white wine and red wine of the best, for the guests. One and another of these, having ended their meal, stroll away; couples are to be seen in the distance crossing the bridge or wandering off into the forest glades; the children and nurses, after throwing many stones into the water, depart with the last seven o'clock omnibus; the people who still remain sit peacefully enjoying the evening and watching the sunset. There is one young soldier with a pretty tenor voice who sings to his companions over the lemonade and absinthe bottles, long interminable ditties which last on from daylight into twilight; from twilight into starlight we ourselves—a.m and p.m.—also dine off fritures and stewed fruits and vegetables, we go for a

drive, we return, the voice is singing still, and the praises of "charmante Gabrielle" are flowing on.

Late in the evening, when ease has come to the stress and heat, when more stars have risen, dusky forms are still in front of the inn, looking like shadows among the trees of "la Terrace" as they call the little gravelled plantation where the acacias and chairs and tables grow alternately. Three men in the road are playing a game in the deepening twilight. They can hardly see, but they go on by starlight, exclaiming, measuring their distances, and crouching over their points; an old woman comes down the steps from the lighted kitchen. "Eh, la mère Simonne, où allez-vous?" the gamblers cry hospitably. Then "la mère Simonne" stands by, also absorbed in the fortunes of the game. Darkness has fallen on the day and on the hills beyond the river where one or two lights are scattered. I, who had been reading one of her books and a book lately written about her, could almost imagine George Sand at work writing through the night by one of these faint lights; for I remember that special time when she came to Fon-

tainebleau alone with her son, as a boy. All day they wandered in the woods collecting his favourite insects and beetles and plants; half the night she sat on while he slept, writing romantic novels to earn the money to pay for their holiday journey.

I

My little dissertation concerns the book I read at Fontainebleau rather than Fontainebleau itself; it was the story of the mistress of Nohant in 1874. She was an old woman then, and the disastrous storm of middle-life had swept out of her existence. She was calm and wise and beneficent as in her prime. No one has ever written so delightfully of old age as George Sand has done herself in her writing and in her daily actions too.

The art of getting old is, I think, specially understood in France. With her, it was something more, it was a ripening and changing, a progress to the very last. It is an ease and help to one's mind to read of George Sand, in her later days, in her Berrichon home; to

read her noble correspondence, and the story of Nohant and of its inhabitants, of the cheerful and talkative guests who arrive to share its hospitalities; the neighbours from La Châtre, the great people from Paris—the great musicians, the men of letters, the men of newspapers and of books. As one reads, all the visionary company seems to surround one. One can almost hear the eager voices, the strains of music (and *what* music!); one can almost breathe the whiffs of the cigarettes from the garden as well as the fragrant scent of the pine leaves, and hear the deep tones of the châtelaine as she converses with her somewhat noisy visitors.[1] Her son Maurice, the naturalist, is a charming figure as he comes strolling in—he also must have had a deep voice like his mother.

All the roads in the province seem to have led to Nohant, to judge by the company it kept. One of them passes by an old inn where all night long, as I have heard, the carts go

[1] There is a wonderful description in her *Impressions* of Liszt playing, and the friends talking and listening without in the garden.

rumbling by to the neighbouring market, and where the memory of the lady of Nohant is green. Two travellers who spent the night there not long ago can tell of the cheerful legends which are still so vivid in remembrance that they seem to belong to to-day—of the champagne and pasties sent for from the Château in haste to entertain the unexpected guests; and how when Alexandre Dumas and Prince Napoleon were coming Madame Sand always summoned the hairdresser to dress her hair—never at other times. Best of all, there is still the grateful memory of her unending helpful kindness and beneficence to all the people round about her home—this home where she dwelt from her childhood, where, when her life was ended, she lay down to die.

This little book of memoirs, *George Sand*, by Henri Amic, gives a sketch of the great writer in her home. Nohant is a household word to many of us, but it comes before us still more clearly in M. Amic's pages. We can see the long white road leading from La Châtre; the villagers are at their cottage doors

as the young man drives up to the gates of the country-house, those gates which open so hospitably. As one puts the volume aside it is more like remembering a little journey one has taken, instead of a book one has read. Henri Amic, as a very young man, in 1875, wrote a letter to George Sand; she answered with kindness inviting him to her country-house, and the grateful visitor's remembrance of it all resulted in this charming sketch of her in her old age. . . .

We are not all made in a lofty mould; for many of us these small details and note-books, this young man's treasured collection of affectionate remembrance, will give a more definite impression of the latter days of George Sand's life than many a more important treatise, upon the influence shall we say of the romantic school; upon hereditary genius, upon impressionability, upon esthetics, and the paradox of daily life.

In this illustrated pamphlet (it is scarcely more) Madame Sand is made to talk; her sayings are recalled, she sits familiarly with her parasol under the big cedar-tree, with the

pleasant old country-house beyond; we have the illustrations to look at as well as the printed matter; there are the shutters, there is the terrace, the *perron*, the doors and windows wide open to the careless ordered garden. One seems to be at home in the shade of the great trees growing in the pathway. These French country-houses and homesteads are different from English homes; with us places are apt to turn sad and mouldy when they are not trim and well kept; French country-houses may be safely left to their own devices.[1] The lawns may be uneven, the beds may be choked with tangled growth, nasturtium and marguerite and dahlia straggling wildly, but there is none of the desolate sadness which often lurks among our tangles. In the golden foreign light the happy glory of the land and the sky reigns triumphant, quite independent of the gardener's art.

[1] Here is one of George Sand's descriptions from her window. "When I awoke at five this morning," she says, "the garden was still asleep, awakening from dreams but silent in the early mist and not yet scenting the air. The sky was awake, palest incandescent lights were vibrating, a slender crescent moon with silver line hung before the golden gates of the morning. . . ."

II

Coming along in his country carriage M. Henri Amic had talked to the people by the way. "C'est la bonté même, la bonté du bon Dieu, quoi," says one woman, a country-woman in a Berrichon cap, speaking of "not' Dame," as she calls Madame Sand. "Des Femmes comme ça—le moule en est brisé, on n'en fait plus," she says. Henri Amic notes it all down along with his first sight of the house among the elms and walnut-trees, and the charming welcome he receives. He is let in by a maid in her peasant's dress, who takes him through the dining-room into the drawing-room, and almost immediately he describes hearing the vibrating tones of a voice outside, and the door opens to let in the two little girls and their grandmother. The young man is received at once as a friend; taken out into the garden, while Madame Sand talks to him in that eloquent voice, leading the way under the great cedar in front of the house and along the avenue of apple-trees, where the *fleurs vivaces*, as he calls them, are growing in

abundance. Of course Amic has brought a play in manuscript to read to her. Poor Madame Sand, who has her own unique experience of manuscript,[1] suggests he should defer the reading, warns him that writing for the stage is the most difficult of all writing. "Plays depend on their interpreters," she says; "they depend on the public as much as on the author, and the public changes its mind, its impression, its fashion, and sympathies." Then she goes on to talk—and how well she talks. She tells the young man not to be surprised if he does not succeed at first. "Literature is nothing else than the history of life itself," she says; "you are very young to know that history," she adds. Once she wrote that when she died she hoped to go to some place where there was neither reading nor writing, but this must have been a passing phase—to her reading and writing were feeling, were uttering, were a life within a life.

To return to our traveller. At six o'clock the dinner-bell rings, and the little company

[1] "Your MS. is No. 152 in order," she writes somewhere to some importunate poet.

sits down to a cheerful meal; one of Madame Sand's old friends, M. Edmond Plauchut, is there, the editor of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. "Each one of us is happy to be present," says the author, "and this tranquil gaiety is delightful."

French habits are not like ours. After dinner we read that they all play at hide-and-seek, etc., and, after the children's bed-time, at four-handed dominoes. When Amic leaves he is full of regret. "I see it all before me long after I have left," he writes; "the dear, big drawing-room with the long piano, the two old armchairs hung with cretonne on either side of the chimney-piece. The great table in the centre with the seat always especially kept for Madame Sand—and there are the walls hung with pictures, Aurora of Koenigsmark and Maurice de Saxe, Dupin de Francueil and Maurice Sand. When I leave all this my gratitude reaches from the dear hosts to the things which surround them."

It is interesting to be made acquainted with all the people who lived at Nohant in 1875. There is Lina, the devoted daughter-in-law—a

daughter of Calamatta, the artist and engraver; there is Maurice Sand, the other master of the house—slow, brilliant, persistent, and affectionate, without great ambition; there are the children Lolo and Titine, who mean so much to their grandmother and to their parents, "those flowers" of whom she loves to write. Then we read of the old servant, la mère Thomas, *La Tomate* as they call her. You are introduced into the old salon with its polished floors and the square of carpet under the big round table, round which the family and the friends sit of an evening. There is George Sand's special place at the table, and the two pianos upon which Liszt and Chopin must have played in turn, and the pictures on the walls in their old-fashioned frames. The old clock still seems to be ticking out of the times of the Louises, of Marie Antoinette, of the Great Terror, of Napoleon and the returning Bourbons. Through all catastrophes Nohant has stood firm, sheltering the descendants of that charming old survivor of monarchic times, Monsieur Dupin de Françueil at whose

death his widow had come hither with her only son, who was the first Maurice—the father of George Sand.

So much has been said about Madame Dupin de Françueil, the grandmother, and about her very varied ancestors, Aurora of Koenigsmark and the marshals and the kings, and the dancing ladies, George Sand's great-grandmothers, that it is needless to enter into it all once more; but when one thinks of this remarkable woman of our own day ruling her strange court, it is impossible to ignore Marshal Saxe and King Augustus altogether, and the many extraordinary people from whom Aurore Dupin descended. Françueil, her agreeable grandfather, figures in all the memoirs of his time, and he had a servant, a sort of attendant secretary, of the name of Jean Jacques Rousseau, who writes in his memoirs that he was dismissed from this situation for stealing ribbon. Madame Sand told Henri Amic that she had heard from her grandmother that this was a pure invention of Jean Jacques's own imagining—so Monsieur de Françueil himself had told his wife.

In the beginning of Karénine's book about George Sand there is a charming frontispiece of Aurore Dupin as a child, from a pastel done at the time. It is the portrait of an irresistible little girl, with dark eyes, thoughtful looks; simple, wondering, wise, no wonder that child grew to be a genius, with such charming signs of the future already marked upon her baby face.

Amic gives a picture of George Sand in early middle life. It is signed Calamatta, and dated 1840. This is certainly also a very striking portrait. It represents a force rather than a woman, and gives the impression of a fantastic person, as people are indeed when they have been set aloof and apart from the rest of the world. George Sand wears a loose dress with big sleeves, like a nun's, an odd head-dress of falling ribbons fastened round her head—it was a fashion of the time—a kerchief is crossed upon her breast, she has a ring upon her fore-finger, like one of Holbein's ladies. She is looking beyond you. Oddly enough, something of this reserve, this suggestion of immunity from life's commonplace, has now and again

struck me in some of Madame Sand's old acquaintances, in people who belonged to her influence rather than to her companionship. They had and have a conviction, a certain poignant style, every word and look suggested a fact, and not an epigram only as now.

III

The only time the writer ever saw Madame Sand she gave her the impression of a sort of sphinx in a black silk dress. Her black hair shone dully in the light as she sat motionless, her eyes were fire, it was a dark face, a dark figure in the front of a theatre box. Two men were sitting behind her—I remember the cold, unemotional, almost reluctant salutation she gave in return to Mrs. Sartoris's gracious and animated greeting. This was my only sight of that woman of genius, of that multitude of women whose acquaintance I only seem to be making at last. I have always realised that my meeting with George Sand came about not when I saw her, not even when I was reading her books, but suddenly one day when I shut

one up. We were passing through a lonely green valley, rock-sprinkled, ivy-grown, crossed by rushing streams—it had been there upon the page—suddenly a newly realised sense of her fellowship with nature and natural things was revealed. I was somehow conscious that this peace and utter satisfaction I was myself feeling came from her, in some mysterious way, and I seemed to hear something like the echo of a psalm which she had sung.

Many people have said that Consuelo was drawn from Mrs. Sartoris; others have christened Madame Pauline Viardot Consuelo. I once asked this latter lady about George Sand. "Everything has been already said," she answered, "Tout a été dit; mais ce que l'on ne dira jamais assez, c'est combien elle était bonne. Elle était bonne, bonne, bonne." This particular Consuelo went on to say that she had only known George Sand in her later life; it was she who had rendered her one great and special service for which she should ever be grateful. Madame Sand had been the person to suggest and bring about her happy marriage with M. Viardot.

On one occasion—so Mrs. Kemble used to tell us—Mrs. Sartoris called on George Sand. Mrs. Kemble asked her sister with some interest what had happened, what Madame Sand had said, and what she was like. The younger sister laughed. "She was very vehement, very dictatorial, very contradictory; in short, very like yourself, Fanny." But this can only have been a joke, for the two women were of different elements and worlds apart. Mrs. Kemble had humour, George Sand was absolutely without humour. Would that that saving grace had been there to rescue her from the exuberances of romance. Balzac's description of her, after one of the great earthquakes of her life, alone in a big room at Nohant, with pretty yellow slippers, smart stockings, red pantaloons, and a double chin, sitting smoking in a big chair, gives one an impression of some deadly dull Bohemia which is odd and jarring. "She has been a year at Nohant alone, and very sad," he writes. "She is working enormously, she leads something the life I lead," says Balzac; "she goes to bed at six in the morning and

rises at midday—I go to bed at six and rise at midnight. Then we sit talking through the night, taking the position to which each feels entitled. 'Je causais avec un camarade,' he says, 'elle a de hautes vertus, de ces vertus que la société prend au rebours.' We discussed everything seriously, with good faith, with the candour and the conscience worthy of *great shepherds who are leading flocks of men*. [This seems to have been their genuine conviction.] . . . She is an excellent mother; she is adored by her children, but she dresses her daughter Solange as a little boy, which is not well. She smokes unceasingly; she has been the dupe of others; she is of those who are powerful at home and in personal influence and understanding, and yet who are doomed to be taken in again and again. I am convinced that she drew her own self in the Princesse in the *Secrétaire Intime*. She knows and she says of herself that which I have always thought without telling her, that she has neither strength of conception nor the gift of construction, neither unerring truth nor pathos; but that, without knowing the French

language, she has style. She takes—as I do —celebrity as a joke, and she despises the public, whom she calls 'jumento'!"

After his visit to Nohant, Balzac's relations became more and more friendly with George Sand; an interesting correspondence followed, each writer acknowledging the merit of the other. When Balzac died, George Sand wrote a special notice, which was published as a preface to his completed works in 1855.

Browning once gave me a striking account of George Sand, whom he had seen just after the Revolution in '48, when men's heads were failing them, and their hearts too. He described a little procession of bewildered and almost frantic patriots coming to her for help, advice, money; they were a wild set, so he described them. She, on the contrary, sat there calm, business-like, collected, giving her whole attention to each in turn, sending this one to England, that one to Switzerland, finding funds, good counsel, good hope for one after another—her letters to Prince Napoleon, praying for remission of sentence for the condemned, are in themselves a noble monu-

ment, indeed, of courage, of eloquence, of faithful charity.

I once saw in Paris, at the school of the Beaux Arts, an exhibition of the portraits of the last century, which spoke to the imagination, for the voices were hardly silent, and the faces were still vivid in the mind of the elders of this generation. We had come along the quay with its absorbing sights, by the flowing river carrying its many boats and steamers; we had turned away from the delightful green vista of parks, palaces, and shining domes, from the old bookstalls, and the incantations of shining bric-à-brac, and come into halls consecrated, as I have said, by the steps of the generations which had but just passed away from it all.

Among the pictures were three sketches which specially attracted me—portraits of Paganini, George Sand, and Balzac—almost starting from the frames, so vividly did they *exist* for the onlooker.

Paganini's was a masterpiece. You saw a genius on fire, so to say, possessed by his passion of music, actually *making* that passionate vibration which entranced his hearers; he

gave one the impression of a man playing himself to death. The little sketch of George Sand, with her great eyes and her oval heavy face, was less characteristic, but it was the sibyl quiescent, and if she would but look up, we feel that we could understand her oracle better. And Balzac, in his dressing-gown, romantic, massive, ugly, and magnificent, is a revelation to a bewildered reader who knows not how much to believe, how much to wonder, as he reads.

I once heard a brilliant French woman, speaking of George Sand, cry out: "Yes, she writes admirably of peasant life, but it is like describing a farm without the manure; it is peasant life on the stage, adapted for genteel noses."

When one thinks of the talented authors who devote themselves to describing dung-heaps one feels in some charity with George Sand.

IV

Henri Amic was the friend of a later time, when all the mad storms and reckless, de-

sperate delusions were over. He was fortunate, for he came in for the calm end of the long, generous, ugly woven drama of her life. He not only went to Nohant, he used often to call upon Madame Sand in her apartment in Paris. She liked the farther shores of the Seine, where she always lived when in town—the Quai Voltaire, the garden of the Luxembourg—no wonder those ancient quarters attracted her; they always seem to be the real Paris, where its real heart beats; the new boulevards and the Bois de Boulogne are but suburbs, overflowings from the old city. When we, too, made a pilgrimage to George Sand's old home we drove up the street of the little stream, the Rue du Bac, with the fanciful shops on either side: the old book-shops and print-shops, the marts for ancient furniture, those strange warehouses where saints are sold in pairs, and angels by the half-dozen with golden wings, and holy families almost life-size, all carved and painted pink and blue, with coronets of gold and red—we passed the old walls of enclosed courtyards, over which the green lilac-trees and ivies come thrusting;

the archways of fine old mansions, many of which still retain their ancient state, others are convents now—museums—schools of art and learning. Then we come to the great theatre of the Odéon, where so many of George Sand's plays were acted, and past the café where she used to dine, and so we reach a somewhat imposing-looking doorway, 5 Rue Gay-Lussac, the last house where she used to stay when she was in Paris. We read that in later times she would be so tired by her short visits to town, and her work and her talk, that she sometimes fell asleep for thirty hours at a time. We asked leave to see her rooms, which were on the first floor, but were told that this was not possible. "But," said the concierge, "there is a lady who lives just underneath, and her apartment is identical; I think she would let you look in if you wished it." The lady agreed, and we passed into the inner court-yard, and mounted a few steps and were admitted then and there. First came a narrow passage with a kitchen looking to the court, then a couple of fair-sized rooms each with two tall shuttered windows to the street.

The first was a bedroom, but the owner, an admirer of George Sand, made me enter the inner room, which seemed absolutely dark at first, until she had flung open the tall shutters. Then I saw a long-shaped, rather lofty room looking to the open place; an *étagère*, a small inlaid table, and a huge stuffed sofa covered with leather.

"This was George Sand's sofa," said the lady solemnly. "Sit upon it, if you like; she used to fling herself down to rest upon this couch for an hour in the night when she was at work; all night long she used to drink coffee to keep herself awake. Alexandre Dumas *fils* has sat upon this seat," the lady continued, "so has Dumas *père*. My husband was alive when George Sand died, and he bought it from Monsieur Maurice Sand, who would part with nothing else. We introduced it through the window, it was too large to pass the doorway." The sacred sofa was certainly the biggest couch I ever saw, with a corner to it and leather buttons all along.

M. Amic tells us that he was shown a correspondence written long years before, belong-

ing to the early stormy days, when Mme. Dudevant had just left her husband and was vainly trying to find a means to live; she had thought of writing, but she feared rebuff; she had been trying to paint upon wood, but was obliged to give it up. "What interests me above all in these letters," says Amic, "is to find the Madame Sand I know in harmony in every point with her past self. She seems to me, then as now, gay, devoted, very simple, very modest, and, above all, maternal and good." "It makes me happy" he repeats, "to find her always so completely in harmony with what I know her to be."

No wonder the young man is grateful; the letters which the elder woman writes to him are admirable and touching in their justness and interest, no less when they discourage than when they would encourage. She urges him to keep to his profession, to put off literary aspirations; every word is straight and wise: "Read a great deal without ceasing to write, vary your studies so as to renew your intelligence —this is a necessity for every human being who writes; observe, think,

write down what you yourself have felt, not what you imagine others to be feeling. Feed your head and your heart also." "Laissez dormir votre idée," she says, "vous la réveillerez plus tard"—it is a pity to spoil the saying by translation. "You write easily, your style is pure, you are well endowed, but this is not enough; before you think of producing you must inform yourself and work hard and constantly; 'piocher ferme,'" she says.

V

It was but a very little time before her death that she wrote another letter addressed to the author of the history from which I have been quoting. He is impatient and tired of his work, he wants to give up the bar and take to literature; she reproaches him and urges him to keep to his vocation. "I have thought of your discouragement—I have thought of it, and I do not sympathise. It is not possible that you are lazy, for you have intelligence and a heart. Laziness is the infirmity of a

poor spirit, and your soul is large; you do not fear the dry aridity of the beginnings of things." Then, speaking of his desire to give up his legal studies, "It is the history of civilised man upon earth that you disdain to learn; how can you think you can become a good writer by ignoring all this and suppressing the very reason of your being? How often I have told you that my ignorance was one of the sorrows of my life as a writer! Here is a closed door for me, opening wide for you, and you refuse to enter: you who have youth, facility, memory, *time*—above all, time—spoilt child that you are. You complain of the life you lead; you are distracted because you choose to be distracted; when one wishes to shut oneself up, one shuts oneself up; when one would work, one works in the midst of noise; one accustoms oneself to it as one accustoms oneself to sleep in the midst of the rolling of carriages."

"Dear child, have I pained you?" she asks in a second letter. "I am all sad when I think of it, but I speak as if I had brought you into the world. I have said harder things to

Maurice when he suffered from the languors and irresolutions of your age. To write, you must have lived and sought—you must have digested much, loved, suffered, waited, working always ('piochant toujours'). You do not want to be like those urchins of literature who think no end of themselves because they print platitudes and absurdities; fly from these men like the pest. No, believe me, art is sacred, a cup that we can only drink after prayer and fasting. Put it aside if you cannot carry on together the study of the foundations of things and the first efforts of imagination; you will return only stronger and in better mood when you have stood your trial by will, by persistence, by the vanquishing of disgust, by the sacrifice of leisure and amusement."

Is not this a fine letter from a worker of seventy years who has laboured all her life, to a boy scarce over twenty, starting on his way? It is too long to quote at full length, but every sentence rings like a bell calling to work or to prayer.

George Sand's relations with Flaubert, her "vieux Troubadour," as she names him, are

also specially delightful and touching: the motherly instinct by which she tries to dispel the gloom which settled upon his morbid, generous spirit; the charming way she sympathises, laughs, encourages—all these things make one realise what this woman must have been for those friends who depended on her.

"You must n't be ill, you must n't be cross, my old Troubadour," she writes in 1872; "you must cough and get well, and say that France is mad, humanity stupid, and that we are not well-finished animals; only we must love each other all the same, oneself, one's fellow-creatures, above all, one's friends. I have sad hours, but I look at my flowers, those two children who are always smiling; their charming mother, my good, hard-working son, the end of the world would still find him searching, classifying, following out each day's task, and, when he takes a rare hour's rest, he is gay as Polichinelle himself. I should like to see you less irritated, less occupied with the foolishness of others; to me it seems all waste of time, like complaining of the weather or the flies."

She tries to encourage with a noble constancy. "The eternal thing is the sentiment of the beautiful in a good heart," she writes; "both these are yours, you *have not the right* not to be happy. Well, sad or gay, I love you, and I am always expecting you, but you never speak of coming to see us."

Elsewhere she lectures him. "To live in oneself is so bad, the greatest of intellectual pleasures is the possibility of return to oneself after being absent for a long time; but always to inhabit this ego, the most tyrannical, the most exacting, the most fantastic of companions—no, it is not to be done. You shut up an exuberant nature in a dungeon, you make a tender and indulgent heart into a misanthrope." Then she tells him that they live in bad times, and that to surmount them they must not curse but pity them. In one of her last letters, at sixty-nine, she tells Flaubert that she goes every day to plunge in the cold froth of her little river—it refreshes and restores and fits her for work! She writes to him, ill and in pain, but still full of courage and benevolence. His book has been criti-

cised; she fears the effect upon him. "It is all the worse for you that you will not be a man of nature and that you give too much importance to human things. We *are* nature. We live in nature, by nature, and for nature; talent, wit, genius are natural phenomena like the wind, the stars, the clouds. It is not of criticism that man should ask what he has done, what he wants to do. Criticism knows nothing, its business is to chatter; nature alone can speak to the intelligence an imperishable language.

"I can write no more, I must tell you I love you. Send news of yourself."

Memorial fêtes have lately been held to George Sand's memory, but her collected letters are the best monument and tribute to her life, as we read in them the constant unselfish thoughts and doings: of her liberal and splendid gifts, of the pains she took, the readiness of mind, the courage to meet troubles, which she realised more for others than for herself. How many during the great war had she not rescued from death, from exile, from sickness, from prison; she who had judged so madly,

who had been so blind for herself, was wise and far-seeing for others. Again and again she had given help and wisdom and advice and medicines, simples from her garden, the precious balms and ointments of good-will and sympathy; none had ever been sent empty from her door.

When the time came for her to cease her long life's-work she was carried to the grave by her children, by her friends, by the sobbing villagers. Victor Hugo telegraphed an oration like a volley of musketry over her grave. In far-away Russia Tourguenieff wrote a grateful message of admiration that was never despatched. Flaubert wept for her—he who had known her faithful kindness for years past; so did the humble people who trusted her ever and turned to her with undoubting hearts.

Few people have a better right to speak kindly of old age than George Sand. If ever there was a case of "hang thou my fruit upon the tree," it was hers. She ripened to the last. Her outlook grew wider as time passed over her head; those unforgotten eyes of hers

never lost their brightness, but they looked up and around instead of downwards. How sound and to be trusted was her judgment when it was no longer overthrown by the gust of egotistic passion! Her last letters to Flaubert are beautiful among letters, bright with the light of understanding friendship, criticising his work, and, what is far more rare, pointing out not only what is wrong but what may be made right in his books. They are as beautiful in style as any she ever wrote in her youth; her heart is in them as much as her genius. The letters to the young disciple, panting after success, are full of a motherly-grandmotherly charity and the interest which belongs to all sincere feeling, as well as the harmony of that which has itself endured to the end. It is almost always good reading when the people who write are interested in one another and in what they are saying. As people get older the joy of life is no longer able to carry them along oblivious of everything but their own being and emotion; the feeling is there still, only in a new shape; it is no longer a distinct note sounding clearly,

it is a chord that strikes, an accompaniment that harmonises the crudities.

For George Sand to the end of her life discretion is non-existent; its place is occupied by a sort of benevolent self-sufficiency, a genius of expression. She is an improvisatrice, as Henry James justly says. "She wrote as a bird, she never studied her expression."

Renan, writing of George Sand soon after her death, used a true simile. He spoke of her "sonorous soul," and he said she was the Eolian harp of her time.

The music varies which is given from the wind by reeds and strings, each sounding the one note belonging to it. Some are more fit than others to sing encouragement as the quickening blast sweeps by. Was it to Flaubert or another that she wrote: "Je te souhaite la meilleure destinée possible en ce triste monde, où il faut courage, patience, travail et volonté—resignation surtout"?

No. VII

LINKS WITH THE PAST

I

If the Fairy Blackstick ever wastes her time on soliloquies and speculations, and if anything at all strikes her very particularly after ten or twenty thousand years of experience, she might perhaps be inclined to compare the present condition of women with what it was in the early years of Queen Victoria's reign. There is certainly a difference—women are freer under King Edward's rule, more independent, more impressionable, more generally interested in the affairs of life, and probably a great deal happier than they used to be sixty years ago; but notwithstanding the spread of education—perhaps because of it—they seem in some ways less dominant

and important, not so much considered, as they once were. They may be authors now, but they are not such authorities; they may be teachers, but they are no longer mistresses. They seem less of personalities somehow. It is true that dress reverts to those feminine and graceful times. Flounces, flowing scarves, falling curls, open-work stockings, and large silk bags were all the fashion then, and seem to be coming into fashion once more. But even if women go back in dress and looks to the 'forties, I cannot imagine our daughters and granddaughters really subsiding into the elegant domesticity of the ladies who wore big bonnets and tripped escorted by gentlemen in full trousers with straps, and with tassels hanging to their canes, and with stiff stocks under their chins.

Society consisted of a series of little kingdoms then, not of a number of small republics as now. I cannot imagine any person now alive whose name would describe a whole phase of life as some of these past names do to us. The mention of them brings back the thought, not only of the people themselves

but of the good company they kept—Doctor Johnson, Mrs. Thrale, even the irrepressible Miss Anna Seward come before us surrounded by their admirers. To take a more modern instance, when not long ago Mrs. Procter passed away, Charles Lamb himself seemed to die again, and the dear and gentle Barry Cornwall and all the kind and comfortable company of wits and poets who gathered round the Procters' hearth seemed to go farther off into space; and so, indeed, it seemed when Mrs. Kemble died, the last of her noble generation.

The stately old tree falls, and we miss its spreading shade and comprehending shelter; to the last the birds have sung for us in the branches and the leaves hang on to the end, and old and young gather round still, and find rest and entertainment until the hour comes when all is over. The old branches go, and the ancient stem with so many names and signs carved deep in its bark, and the memories of the storms and sunshines of nearly a century.

II

Eliza Horace Smith, who died in her house at Brighton but the other day, could go back to the times of Princess Charlotte of Wales, who had driven her as a child in her big coach through the London squares in company with some other children well known to the Princess. She could remember Keats and Shelley, so she has told me, and also we read of her as being desired by her father to look at a gentleman "in ambrosial dark, and sitting beneath a wide-spreading ilex tree." "Do you see that man?—that is a poet," said Horace Smith. It was Keats, already ill and suffering, who had come from Hampstead to Fulham for the day.

There is an old row of houses forgotten by the tide, and still standing at Fulham amid the new lamps and half-baked bricks, and the waste and lumber of the railway, and of the flats rising to gigantic heights. There the little peaceful row still stands, looking quaint and picturesque, awaiting its doom with tranquil dignity. If I do not mistake it was in

one of these pretty old houses, an end house with a large garden then belonging to it, that Horace Smith dwelt after his second marriage. It was here that his daughter Rosalind was born, and that he made the acquaintance of Keats and of Shelley, to whom he was so true a friend to the last. This fidelity of feeling and interest was inherited by his daughter. She has shown me page upon page in Shelley's flowing hand-writing—notes to her father rather practical than poetic, requests, details, demands for books, for bills, directions about directions and packings and despatchings. The letters came from Pisa and from other places in Italy. I also saw two or three from Byron and from Leigh Hunt on immense sheets of paper; they appeared, besides the thanks, to be full of rather tiresome directions and elaborate requisitions—one could only be amazed at the extraordinary patience of all that brilliant generation, at the careful details and calculations it went into. We who have life simplified for us by a paternal government, parcel post, money orders, telegraphs, halfpenny cards, can hardly realise the impor-

tance of minutiæ in those days of straps and stocks; nor, indeed, can we quite realise the wonderful interest and response of Horace Smith, the kind man of business, man of friendship,—one hardly knows by what name to call the link between him and his beloved poets.

At Shelley's death Horace Smith found that he had paid some hundred and fifty pounds for postages and small commissions which he never asked for, so Miss Horace Smith once told me. It was to Horace Smith that Mrs. Shelley came flying in her despair after her widowhood—the Smith family was at Versailles at the time, and to them for unfailing help and counsel the poor young lady turned. Eliza said she could remember her coming in, with her pale face and in her travelling dress after the long forlorn journey.

III

In the biographical preface to *Pendennis* there is the following sentence about one of the children of Horace Smith:

"In those days there was living in Brighton a charming little girl, with dark eyes and curly brown hair, and I have often heard the story how she came running into the room and said her name was Laura, and how the writer of *Pendennis* then and there made her the godmother to his new heroine. She was the youngest of the three daughters of Horace Smith, of the *Rejected Addresses*. She married Mr. John Round, and died still young, still dark-eyed, gay, and charming. . . ."

The other sisters never married, though Rosalind, the second, was one of the most beautiful of women, and rumours of rejected addresses followed her more persistently than any other person I have ever known. I remember hearing her say, laughing, to my father: "I seem to have some natural attraction for curates; I really cannot help it—nothing would induce me to marry a curate. I suppose it must be some law of contrast which interests them in me."

The curates of those days had very good taste if they admired Rosalind Smith, for no

one who ever saw her will forget the bright face, the sweet voice discoursing so gaily; when her dark curls turned to snowy white, the lady was prettier if possible than before; light of step, kind of heart, sweet-tempered, and devoted to the very last to her elder sister, who survived her in sad loneliness of spirit for many years.

In the *Life of Horace and James Smith* there are occasional mentions of Eliza, who was a great deal the eldest of the three daughters. She seems to have been delicate as a child, then she improves. "Her bones no longer rattle as she walks," writes her father; and finally she is ordered to be diligent, and to practise her trills and scales when she goes away from home on a visit. She was a brilliant musician in after days. She used to sing very well indeed, besides talking with flashing wit and with confidence. There is a little sonnet to her by her grandfather, written in the lively style of the period, and characteristic of the family wit, which gives one a pleasant impression of good spirits and good humour—Tizey-Phillis had

asked her grandfather to write in her album:

O, what is Cupid with his bow and dart
Compared to Phillis and her strange demands?
The little archer only aims at hearts:
She takes our hearts—then asks us for our hands.
But will no Damon check the wild career,
And strive, at least, to shorten the research—
Nor dare to turn the tables on the fair
By asking her to sign his album in the church?

When poor Phillis was still quite young her beauty was disfigured and her nose hopelessly broken by a terrible fall, which, so I have heard, influenced her whole fate. As she saw herself in the glass afterwards, her heart was heavy indeed; she abandoned a hope then very dear to her, and she made a vow to herself with tears never to let her own mischance in life embitter her feelings or lessen her sympathy in the happiness of others. This vow she endeavoured to keep with the last response of her failing powers, trying to the end to realise, and, in a measure, to enjoy, the happiness of other lives, though she had been left lonely by Fate, and all her generation had gone before her.

IV

Brighton in the days of the Horace Smiths filled the place which some foreign watering-places now hold. It was a playground for many a hard-worked statesman. Literary men came there, painters, actors. It had also a society of its own. Rich Americans did not then exist, but the Duke of Devonshire of those days lived much at Brighton, and entertained. Other people of mark and means had their houses there; many notabilities used to stay there for the season: among these came Harriet Mellon, the well-known Duchess of St. Albans. They came, not in an hour for a week-end as now, but driving down in post-chaises, with their footmen and attendants, and elaborately establishing themselves. We read in the *Newdigate Letters* of the difficulties they often had in finding suitable accommodation for their various followings. To all this spirited society Eliza was welcomed. Her father was evidently proud of her position and success, of her fine singing, her merry talk.

She used to like to dwell on all these times,

on bygone heroines who eloped, on the various bucks and dandies who fought duels and dazzled the onlookers. I have heard her describing the dandies of her youth, a Caradoc among them. So handsome and magnificent, she said, that when he fought a duel in Paris, and was wounded in the arm, all the great ladies appeared with their sleeves cut away and tied up with red ribbons, *couleur de sang*.

"You people are so dreadfully young," said Tizey not long ago to two respectable, middle-aged visitors; "you don't remember any of the people I am telling you about." In the present as in the past she liked the presentable, the agreeable; no one knew better how to appreciate these excellent attributes.

The recording angel may often have suppressed a smile as he put down some brilliant droll saying of Tizey's. He will have had but few effacing tears to drop upon the page. Bacon writes of talk that should be kept salt, not acid. Tizey's talk was salt, not bitter. Her sallies concerned things rather than personal feelings, as befitted "the bright, keen-witted woman whom I delighted to listen to,"

so Mr. Hamilton Aïdé described her with kindly discrimination. When all the world strolls up and down before your windows it is impossible not to be amused and to speculate upon its comings and goings, and Tizey gossiped and speculated; but she could talk of other serious things clearly, definitely, and courageously.

Another of her friends, after a long absence, going to call, was ashamed and touched by the unmistakable pleasure and affection expressed by the invalid in her chimney corner. It was then, as she sat with her back to the window, against which the wind was beating, and with her hands before her in a little muff she liked to use, that Tizey made that well-known answer in reply to the conventional, "I am afraid you feel the change of the weather." "Yes," she answered gravely, "I feel it, and I suffer from it, and I tell myself I am part of the universe." King Lear himself could not have spoken better.

A kind and fair hostess recalls an amusing saying one day, when Miss Horace Smith was staying with her at Cannizaro. Some of the

party had been to the theatre, and on her return Miss Horace Smith was asked whether she had enjoyed the play. "It was all very dull," she said, "the play was dull and the theatre nearly empty—there was nobody in the boxes, nobody in the stalls, not even an ox!" Who ever imagined a stalled ox in such juxtaposition before?

When Mr. Briggs was murdered in a train going to Brighton, a man was suspected because Mr. Briggs's watch was discovered hidden in his boot. "What of that?" cries Miss Horace Smith; "I have a clock in my stocking, but I didn't murder Mr. Briggs."

It was on the terrace of this same hospitable Cannizaro, with its waving woods and spreading lawns, that the writer once heard Miss Smith laughing and replying to a respectful inquirer, "Yes, I suppose we certainly had what people call a *salon*, but what we piqued ourselves most upon was that it never led to a *salle-à-manger*."

It is a received fact that people cannot eat and talk comfortably at the same time, and the superiority of the wit and the conversation

of those bygone educated tea-tables to that of our more elaborate dinner-tables may be easily explained. Our generation writes when it wishes to be heard, that one wrote less, talked more, and more to the point; it read more thoroughly in its own books, and not in Mudie's only, and people having fewer acquaintances gave themselves more to their friends.

The two Miss Horace Smiths in their little Brighton world did something not unlike what the Miss Berrys—Horace Smith's strawberries as he loved to call them—were doing in the quiet house in Mayfair, where the light over the doorway meant that the ladies were at home and ready to receive good company in the unpretentious grey rooms. The pretty little house in Sillwood Place was always lighted up with friendly welcome.

V

Miss Horace Smith once told me a story. It was long and complicated, but she assured me she had told it my father just before he wrote

Pendennis, and that it had partly suggested the opening chapters. It concerned a family living in Brighton, somewhere near Kemp Town. There was a somewhat autocratic father and a romantic young son who had lost his heart to the housemaid and determined to marry her. The father made the young man give his word of honour that he would not marry clandestinely, and then having dismissed him rang the bell for the butler. To the butler this Major Pendennis said: "Morgan" (or whatever his name was), "I wish you to retire from my service, but I will give you £200 in bank-notes if you will marry the housemaid before twelve o'clock tomorrow." The butler said, "Certainly, sir," and the young man next morning was told of that which had occurred. As far as I remember a melancholy and sensational event immediately followed; for the poor young fellow was so overwhelmed that he rushed out and distractedly blew his brains out on the Downs behind the house, and the butler meanwhile, having changed his £200, sent a message to say that he had omitted to mention

that he had a wife already, and that this would doubtless invalidate the ceremony he had just gone through with the housemaid.

But Tizey's forte was not as a *raconteuse*. She had too much vapid wit, and, shall I say, too much active good sense; she could not dwell gently and suggestively on the fore-running facts and indications which go to make a story seem real, and to place it vividly before the hearer. It was as a cheerful and witty commentator upon the daily story of life that she was remarkable. She had plenty of prejudices, good old conservative prejudices; she did not at all believe that all men were equal in the eyes of heaven; she would sweep away a whole terrace-full of respectable persons from her door with old-fashioned spirit and decision. Some one once recommended a parlour-maid to her when she was long past eighty. "Your girl came; I sent her away at once," she said; "she wore spectacles. Imagine what would be thought if I allowed a woman in spectacles to open the door. People would imagine I was at my last gasp."

It cannot be denied that sisters make

charming hostesses, wherever one finds them keeping house together and hospitably inclined. For one thing, it is a gain to have two hostesses instead of one, and sisters are accustomed to one another and can understand each other without a word and instinctively feel what is going on: they can talk together of quite different things and yet keep tune. Many a sisterly shrine must occur to each one of us, with warming hearth and pleasant words of welcome. It matters not whether it is in Brighton or in London, past or present; or in murky Manchester or on a Cornish crag, or by some distant Cumberland lakeside; one always seems to be at ease where reflected kindness lights up the friendly hours of companionship and rest.

No. VIII

MARY AND AGNES BERRY

I

Zoffany once painted a picture of two charming little sisters in a garden playing with a big dog: one girl sits on the stump of a newly felled tree holding back the great retriever with a pretty warning finger outstretched; the other sister stands beside her, with a merry questioning look in her dark eyes. The two are little girls of the eighteenth century, and they wear the walking dress of that time—the low frocks and elbow sleeves, also the Georgian shoes and large buckles; their odd feathered toques are not unlike those that are now in fashion.

"If I have picked up few recent anecdotes on our common [writes Horace Walpole, some

years later, in 1788], I have made a much more—to me—precious acquisition. It is the acquaintance of two young ladies of the name of Berry, whom I first saw last winter, and who accidentally took a house here with their father for the season. . . ."

Then he goes on to describe them to his correspondent, Lady Ossory:

"The best informed, the most perfect creatures I ever saw at their age. They are exceedingly sensible, entirely natural and unaffected. . . . The eldest, I discovered by chance, understands Latin, and is a perfect Frenchwoman in her language; the younger draws charmingly, and has copied Lady Di's gypsies, which I lent."

(How well one knows that particular gypsy faded shaded style of bygone art!) Horace goes on with his pretty description:

"They are of pleasing figures; Mary, the eldest, sweet, with fine dark eyes that are very lively when she speaks, with a symmetry of face that is the more interesting from being pale; Agnes, the younger, has an agreeable, sensible countenance. I must even tell you

they dress within the bounds of fashion, but without the excrescences and balconies with which modern hoydens overwhelm and barricade their persons. . . ."

He had at first refused to make their acquaintance, but later on he changed his mind. "In a very small company," he says, "I sat next to Mary and found her an angel within and without." Horace Walpole was past seventy, and Mary was about twenty-five years old at this time.

She was born in 1763, Agnes in 1764. Their mother died in their infancy; their father seems to have been an amiable nonentity, described by Horace Walpole as a "little merry man with a round face." "I was still quite a young girl when I found I had to be adviser and protector to both my father and my sister," so Mary told some one in after years. It was Horace Walpole's interest and notice which first gave the Miss Berrys their position in London society; it was their own intelligence and kindliness which enabled them to hold it for sixty years, from that day when Mary first sat next him at dinner. They

knew all the most interesting people who lived during the century; they made them welcome, and their hospitality was welcome to others. They received almost every night; when a light in the window over the doorway showed that they were at home and ready for their friendly visitors.

Mr. Seeley, the editor of a selection of Walpole's letters, quotes a personal description of Horace himself as a visitor:

"He would enter a room in the style of affected delicacy then in fashion, *chapeau bas* between his hands, walking on his toes, knees bent . . . his dress would be lavender and silver, or white silk worked in the tambour, with partridge-coloured silk stockings, and gold buckles, and ruffles and lace."

A later sadder picture belongs rather to the period of his friendship with the Berrys. Horace, lame and suffering, supported by his valet and followed by the little fat dog bequeathed to him by Mme. du Deffand, is helped to the sofa, on which he establishes himself, and where, wonderful to read of, he used to remain talking agreeably from *five*

o'clock after dinner till two in the morning. Present intercourse seems mute and frozen in comparison! So much for his talking. Concerning his writing, Sir Leslie Stephen pays him a real tribute in the opening lines of his article on Horace Walpole, when he says, "The history of England throughout a very large segment of the eighteenth century is simply a synonym for the works of Horace Walpole," and in a very few sentences he raises before us the brilliant wit who "could throw electric flashes of light on the figure he described," "who errs from petulancy not from stupidity," "who can appreciate great qualities by fits, tho' he cannot be steadily loyal to their possessors." Another critic has written of "the man best described by negations, the dilettante, for whom business was a trifle, and trifles were serious business, the Diogenes who was a gentleman usher at heart"—all the same for Fairy Blacksticks and other elderly feminine sympathisers, there seems in this late friendship of the man of negations some revealing dawn of gentleness following that long winter of forced content

and cynicism; some light arising to change the value of the shadows that he valued so unduly, and a vibration of the human under the inhumanity of selfishness and affectation. Old, broken, and weary, Horace Walpole begins to love some one better than himself. Take his letter on parting with the Berrys:

"Sunday, October 10, 1790, the day of your departure. Is it possible to write to my beloved friends and refrain from speaking of my grief for losing you; tho' it is but the continuance of what I have felt ever since I was stunned by your intention of going abroad this autumn? Still, I will not tire you with it often. In happy days I smiled and called you my dear wives; now I can only think of you as darling children of whom I am bereaved."

Elsewhere he goes on:

"I am determined to forbid myself lamentations that would weary you, and the frequency of my letters will prove there is no forgetfulness. If I live to see you again you will then judge whether I am changed."

And then he adds:

"A friendship like mine is not likely to have

any of the fickleness of youth when it has none of its other ingredients. . . . I am not ashamed to say that your loss is heavy to me, and that I am only reconciled to it by hoping that a winter in Italy and the journeys and sea-air will be very beneficial to two constitutions so delicate as yours. Adieu, my dearest friends. It would be tautology to subscribe a name to a letter every line of which would suit no other man in the world but the writer."

This is the language of real and tender feeling, and comes home to one as one reads.

The correspondence reveals a dignified and touching relation between the three, the tired old man of the world and the two girls interested, delighted with his wit, his friends, his kindness, returning his feeling with naturalness and response.

II

These ladies, Horace Walpole's well-loved Strawberries, were landmarks in their way—Mary Berry, the elder sister, had she so willed it, might have married her "devoted" Orford

as he liked to sign himself. "Mayhap I may not write to you again," he says, "for I know not how many minutes to come!" . . .

A certain philosophical acceptance of circumstances distinguished the women of Mary Berry's intellect and generation in contradistinction from the varying impressions of the sentimentalists who followed, of the *nécreuses* who *are*. Self-complacency must have made life much easier in those fortunate times. Miss Berry certainly possessed a great deal of this stoicism, though she was also haunted by sad apprehensions and low spirits. "I feared some real misfortune had befallen you from your letter," writes a friend who is much relieved to find it is only low spirits that she is complaining of.

Mary Berry's absolute independence told all for good in her friendship with the spoiled old man. She was grateful, faithful, interested, but also she went her own way, consulted her own convenience in all her relations with him, held her own, as people say.

Miss Berry's Memoirs were not published till 1865, by Lady Theresa Lewis, one of

her constant visitors, and the three big volumes speak no less for the editor's faithful sympathy and appreciation than for the gift Miss Berry undoubtedly possessed of making friends. Her circumstances and her personality must have been very interesting; her correspondence on the contrary seems extremely dull and didactic, and cannot in the least have done justice to "the angel within and without." Miss Berry herself seems to have been prouder of her serious turn of mind than of any other attraction. There is a characteristic record of her having said of her sister after her death that "she had every charm a woman should possess, but she had not her own intellectual powers, she could not reason so well!"

There are allusions in Lady Theresa's short and admirable preface to Miss Berry's life to Mary's engagement to General O'Hara. Both the sisters indeed seem to have had unhappy love stories. How much share Mary's friendship for Horace Walpole may have had in the breaking off of her marriage we do not know; possibly the fear of wounding him may have

caused delay, and that separation which led to a final estrangement.

Among many of Miss Berry's friends come the names of Joanna Baillie, and of Sir Walter himself on some occasions. Miss Berry once playfully tells Joanna Baillie that in Arcady her name of Berry is changed to Berrina, "and that this name cut by her own fair hand is to be seen carved on one of the largest trees in a ravine at Blantyre." We read of meetings when Berrina reads her works to the approving Joanna, then she goes on to see Sir Walter Scott, and ends the day by dining at Sir John Stanley's and meeting Miss Fanshawe there.

She sees a good deal at one time of the Princess of Wales, of whom she speaks with criticism:

"The last dance she danced with Lyttleton — such an exhibition! but that she did not feel for herself one would have felt for her! An overdressed, bare-bosomed, painted-eyebrowed figure such as one never saw. G. Robinson said she was the only true friend the Prince of Wales has, as she went about justifying his conduct."

The present writer once lived in a house at Wimbledon of which the garden adjoined the gardens of the Grange, which was still standing in 1890, and which had belonged to Sir Francis Burdett. A part of our garden was cut off from what had been the kitchen garden of the Grange, only divided by a ditch and an old straggling hedge. There—so the legend ran—Sir Francis Burdett was walking when he was arrested and carried off to the Tower. For these personal reasons it is interesting to the writer to read the accounts in Miss Berry's diary for 1810 of the streets full of crowds, moving about in all directions to witness the release of Sir Francis Burdett. "Went in our carriage down to Piccadilly just as the procession with its innumerable attendants was passing," writes Miss Berry.

She goes on to tell of shabby carriages, squadrons of people on horseback forming a procession in which Sir Francis was *not;* he having gone quietly from the Tower by water to Putney, and from thence to Wimbledon to the great disappointment of his followers.

It is also pleasant to read that there used to

be sunshine and hay-making in London in those times. Writing on June 26th in 1809 Miss Berry describes:

"After dinner, walked with my father and sister to the fields between Paddington and Bayswater; the hay-making was going on. It was a beautiful, warm, quiet evening. We sat for some time on the cocks of hay which I really enjoyed, but in how melancholy a manner, Heaven, who sees within my soul, alone can know."

The present writer remembers as a child hay-making, cows, and a syllabub in the fields beyond Holland House, and enjoying a hay-cock without any melancholy feelings, except perhaps disappointment to find how little to her taste was that syllabub of which Miss Edgeworth had written such eloquent descriptions.

III

Once, towards the very end of her life, Miss Berry gave a coral necklace to a friend of a younger generation. "Take it, my dear,"

she said, "I wore it the first time I ever met Horace Walpole." This younger friend was Miss Katharine Perry, for whom, and for her sister, Mrs. Frederick Elliot, my father's affectionate admiration was great. These two sisters were on very intimate terms with the ladies of Curzon Street. Miss Perry has left a little privately printed pamphlet of extracts from a diary kept in 1849, of which two or three pages give a pretty picture of the Miss Berrys and their home circle and of the people who frequented it.

Here is a page out of Miss Perry's note-book:

"Dined with the Miss Berrys—Miss Agnes's own dinner. She had said, some days before, she meant this next dinner to be composed of her own particular friends. I am proud to say [Miss Perry writes] she invited Jane (Mrs. Frederick Elliot) and me. The party also included Kinglake, Thackeray, Bielke, Mr. Rich, and the beauteous Louisa, Lady Waterford. . . . Carlyle was discussed, and Miss Berry asking what his conversation was like, Kinglake said, 'Ezekiel. . . .'"[1]

[1] Most of these old friends used to come again in the same

On another occasion Miss Perry also met Macaulay and Sydney Smith, and she describes Sydney Smith's admirable influence upon Macaulay's conversation, preventing a monologue, by which she says its brilliance was greatly enchanced. Miss Berry, in one of her letters to the Dowager Countess of Morley, writes:

"Talking of Macaulay, I hope you have got his book . . . of all the seductive books you ever read. . . . The first edition of 3000 copies was sold in the first week, another of 3000 more is to come out on Thursday."

Mr. Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, I am told, has about equalled this record.

It must have been at one of these dinners that poor Sydney Smith said of his own talk:

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informal way to Chesham Place, where Miss Perry herself was living with Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, her brother-in-law and sister. How plainly it all rises before one! Kate Perry floating into the room, with her graceful ways and wonderful wreaths of crisp, waving, auburn hair; and the good-looking master of the house, with quick, brilliant alertness, and the kind mistress with deep-set grey eyes. It was a kind, amusing house, full of welcome and interest and discussion, with a certain amount of criticism and habit of the world to make its sympathy amusing. Lord Lansdowne used to go there, and Mr. Kinglake and Sir Henry Taylor. The great clan of Elliot used to be seen there, and most of the persons who,

"I have not even the privilege which belongs to every Briton, of speaking about the weather, without a roar of laughter from a set of foolish fellows who suppose every word I speak is a joke."

Here is one of the lady's reminiscences which reminds the writer of an odd fashion which she can remember in her schoolroom days, that of fashionably immoderate peals of laughter, which took the place of the impassive calm of the present. One day, when Kate Perry dined there alone, Miss Berry told certain anecdotes of bygone ladies of fashion. Lady Mary Coke was one of these, and she described her as complaining bitterly of the Empress Maria Theresa:—

"I remember the manner that creature treated me," said Lady Mary Coke. "Why, what did she do?" asked Miss Berry. "Do! why, she gave me for dinner chickens black at the bone. What do you think she gave me for supper?—chickens black at the bone; and

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in those days, were writing and reading and making speeches; and Lady Theresa Lewis herself, and the charming Kent House coterie, and Mr. Spedding, and Mr. Venables, and Lord Houghton, and all the philosophers.

what" (raising her voice) "do you think she gave me for breakfast?—chickens *black* at the bone!"

By this time Miss Berry said she herself was in such fits of laughter that she leant up against the chimney-piece and hid her face in her hands, and Mrs. Damer coming in thought she was in hysterics or that Lady Mary had said something offensive. All Miss Berry could utter was—pointing at Lady Mary—"She is mad; ask her what she had to eat at Lecidè."

There is a charming old house, Aubrey House on Campden Hill, where an impression of its former mistress, Lady Mary Coke, is still to be gained. She was the daughter of the Duke of Argyle. Her portrait with high-piled locks and in the slim flowing robes of Sir Joshua's period is hanging in the room she lived in and devised—the pretty old-fashioned room with windows opening to the lawns through which the lady with her high *coiffe* must have stepped. Hither came Princess Amelia day after day, hither came the guests from Holland House hard by, when the company overflowed.

We have a memorandum of something Miss Kate Perry heard at the Miss Berrys' one day when she was *not* alone with them. One of the gentlemen present had just met the Duke of Wellington at dinner, where the Duke had been speaking of Masséna and of Marshal Soult. He had said: "When I was opposed to Masséna I had neither time to eat or to sleep or to rest, but with Marshal Soult before me I ate and slept and had plenty of leisure." Then he added: "All the same he was a great general; there was no one who could move ten thousand men with greater skill from one place to another or bear on a point with greater rapidity, but"—he added—"when he got the men there he did not know what to do with them!" The Duke must have said this more than once, for the story is to be found in other memoirs of the time. Miss Berry in earlier days had been introduced to Napoleon, and her memoirs contain an amusing description of him and of his court. Mrs. Dawson Damer had gone to Paris in order to present a bust of Fox which she had wished to offer to him; Miss Berry accompanied her.

The two ladies were somewhat disconcerted when he only spoke to them of the opera and made no allusion whatever to the gift.

IV

Impressions vary. A friend, who used as a very young girl to be taken to Curzon Street by her mother, has described to the writer the weary hours during which she sat there silent in a corner, while the elders were discoursing—"not laughing," she said in answer to my question—"quite the contrary. Miss Berry on her carved chair sat upright, never leaning back; stout and dignified, with a large cap ornamented by a bow of ribbon. No one ever contradicted her, every one bowed before her and accepted her views, whatever they might be!" So much for the impressions of fourteen impatiently waiting for life!

Miss Perry notes that she was continually dining and sleeping at the Berrys'—Miss Agnes's health had been breaking a little, but she never would confess she was not well; with her complete unselfishness of character,

her thoughts were so occupied with others that she had no time to devote to herself.

"With all her kind-heartedness [the Diary continues], she had considerable clearness and acuteness of perception: Thackeray always maintained she was the most naturally gifted of the two sisters. At times she had an irritability of manner without more meaning in it than the rustling of the leaves of an old elm tree when the wind passes over it. On one particular evening Mr. Kinglake was interesting us all by his eloquent description of the Greek Church and its magnificent services; my carriage was announced, I could hardly tear myself away. 'I do pity you very much,' Miss Agnes said, 'for having to leave us; we are all very good company to-night.' That evening Miss Agnes appeared in better health and spirits than she had been for a long time; but the next day her health began visibly to decline.

"She lingered on till the middle of January. She begged her friends to come as usual: 'It was less dull for poor Mary,' she said. The last evening of her life she asked who was

below. 'Go down,' she said to Kate Perry, 'and give my love to them all, and tell my dear friend Eöthen not to be anxious about me.' And then, in the early morning, her gentle spirit passed away.

"After a time the light was again placed in the doorway, as a signal that Miss Berry could receive her friends once more. They gathered round, but the light burnt dimly, the gaiety and spirit seemed quenched now that the kind Agnes was gone. We all knew that it was the union of the two sisters which formed the peculiar charm of these evenings in Curzon Street."

. . . . . .

The first sentence of the lecture on the "Four Georges" concerns Miss Mary Berry:

"A very few years since [my father writes] I knew familiarly a lady who had been asked in marriage by Horace Walpole, who had been patted on the head by George III. This lady had knocked at Dr. Johnson's door, had been intimate with Fox, the beautiful Georgian, Duchess of Devonshire, and that brilliant Whig society of the reign of George III.; had

known the Duchess of Queensberry, the patroness of Gay and Prior, the admired young beauty of the Court of Queen Anne. I often thought, as I took my kind old friend's hand, how with it I held on to the old society of wits. . . ."

This was written about 1860, and some years before that time my father had taken us as children one day to the little house in Mayfair where the Miss Berrys had lived since 1830—that No. 8 of which their friend the witty Lady Morley wrote so affectionately, at whose door it was a pleasure to find oneself knocking. I remember my father knocking at the door and pointing out the iron extinguishers, on either side of it, which had served for the torches which once flared to light the dazzling past company that used to climb the narrow staircase. We were shown into a little dim drawing-room giving on the street, and thither presently came a little grey lady; a tiny woman, daintily dressed in grey; she wore a white lace cap and a white muslin tippet, fastened by a pink satin knot; she seemed grave and rather

hurried and preoccupied—"My sister is not well, we must not see our friends to-day; please come again," she said, or words to that effect, and then as she spoke she looked up at my father with a gentle confident glance and a certain expression of arch composure which I think I can still recognise in the portrait of the younger of the girls in Zoffany's picture.

The things which *are*, certainly gain extraordinarily by things which have been—so far-reaching a chord is that one of everyday life.

No. IX

PARIS, PRISMS, AND PRIMITIFS

I

Nature makes merry occasionally, and so does human nature, and Blackstick herself unbends. On Monday, May 2d, in the year of our Lord 1904, there was a soft storm of rain followed by sunshine, and all the trees in the Tuileries, and in the gardens, and the woods round about Paris, came out. They burst into blinding-sweet green and gold; the lilacs followed with their fragrant buds, all the violets and pansies rose from the darkness into light, white pinks began to blossom. Everywhere the streets were garlanded, the people went about carrying posies in honour of the spring. The very funerals going by were great masses of beautiful flowers and wreaths,

lovely tall pyres of roses spreading fragrance. The scentless daffodils of England were not so much in vogue, so it seemed, as more fragrant flowers; though to be sure bountiful bunches of blue forget-me-nots and purple pansies were to be bought for a few pence at street corners, where the old sat dispensing the nosegays and the young came to buy and to carry them off.

Blackstick sometimes travels under the name of P. M., with a companion who is not yet twenty thousand years old, and who shall be A. M. for the occasion. These wanderers frequent a little hostel in a street whose very stones and doorways seem for P. M. dressed with rosemary; A. M. knows of other delightful places and riverside corners; but with or without sweet herbs to recall the past, it is impossible not to love the present in this merry little oasis of the Rue St. Roch. At either end of the quiet street the stream passes along two great thoroughfares, whence the sounds that reach one, the steady tramp of the horses, the jangle of the omnibus bells, the yelling of motors, the trumpetings of

bicyclists, all make a distant chorus which somehow suggests an extra sense of rest to the the narrow street where St. Roch and St. Romain unite to give their friendly shelter.

The owner of the hotel, the old friend of many of those who come there, adds a certain character and a personal feeling to the establishment, and to this his guests respond. Not long ago a traveller, after twenty-five years, came (as people did in the Old Testament and in illuminated missals) carrying a silver cup in his bag to commemorate the friendly connection. . . .

P. M. and A. M., looking out from their third-floor windows, can see across to those two big boulevards of which mention has been made. The Tuileries Gardens spread greenly beyond the Rue de Rivoli as far as the distant quais, which are crossed and recrossed by their crowds of tiny figures. Looking to the east they can almost count the very steps of the great church which has remained firm while so many kings and emperors and revolutions have passed their way. There stands St. Roch stately and unmoved from year to year,

blessing the infants and the young communicants, and the new-married couples and the mourning cortèges as they each come up in turn. From these upper windows A. M. and P. M. seem to live the very life of the city, not only in its outer aspects, but in its domesticities, as they survey the little street with its varying gleams and humours. Look at the hairdresser opposite on the pavement in front of his shop matching his client's hair in the brighter light of the street, while various friends volubly assist. Look at the pretty, pale washerwoman who comes to her door for a breath; a lady from the hotel itself crosses over in slippers to fetch some snowy garment which has been exquisitely starched and gauffered. Look at the greengrocer's man washing his carrots which flash with colour in the slanting sun rays, while the owner of the shop, sitting on a straw chair with an ink-bottle carefully adjusted into a sack of potatoes, is writing his accounts in a book. The people at work, the people at play, are all interested and interesting. They are *primitifs* in their way no less than their predecessors

depicted in the Pavillon de Marsan yonder: the little schoolboys in their capes and pointed hoods, and neat bare legs, as they fly past; the employés and professors as they cross the road with neat, rapid strides; the young girls as they pass stepping gaily in time, arm in arm, as if they were dancing.

Besides the springtime it is also Confirmation time. The whole town is scattered with little brides of ten and twelve years old, in white veils, white shoes, white sashes, accompanied by the proud parents trudging alongside; the father is generally importantly got up with a large and shining hat and boots to match; the mother may be stout and weary-footed from some neighbouring outskirt of Paris, but she wears her bonnet with an air, and is usually carrying a basket. Other parents more prosperous, or less provident, go off to the café at the corner of the street and settle themselves at little tables to feast with their children off cakes and ale. The little bride is the centre of the party, or the conscious little boy in his short white trousers and fringed white ribbons. While the holi-

day-makers sit feasting the workers pass by; perhaps it is a man and his dog yoked together to a wooden cart, or a long waggon crawling on, carrying trunks of trees from the forest to the woodcutters' yard. Perhaps a motor comes next with its casquetted driver, and the smart feathered lady within; . . . the lazy P. M. leans from the window, watching a shabby man who is walking up the middle of the street carrying an exquisite wreath of roses carefully before him; but A. M. calls her away, for the Primitifs are to be visited and the Prisms must wait.

II

The Hôtel St. Romain has the additional advantage of being quite close to the much-frequented shrine of early saints lately revealed to us by the spirited director of the Bibliothèque Nationale and his colleagues, and displayed for our advantage in the Pavillon de Marsan, which is the last addition to the glorious old palaces of the Louvre. This fine gallery is light and strong, and

elegantly built, with handsome staircases and stately rooms on different levels, and with landings which give great variety and character, both of which are often wanting to state galleries. How well one knows the look of them, that turnstile at the entrance and then the stone stairs, and the short room, and the long room out of it—how monotonous and cut to pattern they are apt to be. This, however, is a beautiful home of art, rather than a gallery; nothing is crowded, everything is in its place, and the walls are lined with soft coloured stuffs of delicate shades admirably adapted to their purpose. The Pavillon de Marsan is near the opening of the Rue de Rivoli. Two or three flags and a couple of sentries guard the entrance. Also the portrait of a mediæval lady delicately tinted and securely framed invites the passers-by to enter and to enjoy the feast within; to enjoy the beautiful things which were first recorded for our use when other Edwards were ruling in England, and when Dante was walking the streets of Florence. There hang the pictures on broad walls, of delicate sage-green,

or varied by soft strawberry hangings of silk setting off carvings and old frames and faded gildings. The pictures have come hither from far and near, across seas and centuries; some have lived all these years concealed under other names than their own, and are only now discovered to be themselves by the experienced experts.

Paris and Prisms are familiar to us all. Primitifs are to a certain degree a new revelation of French inspiration, and this charming school is now for the first time catalogued, organised, and collected from afar, brought from convents and churches and distant country places, by the care of Monsieur Bouchot and his patriotic colleagues the Frenchmen of to-day. We have seen some of the pictures before—we have known them under other names, such as Van Eycks and Ghirlandajos. Now under their true flag they appear, and in their true nationality, and as they rise before us, one by one, each seems to be a proof of that which is yet to be made certain. Time has a magnetism of its own, for us beings of an hour, who stand before the

work which the painter placed upon his easel six or seven centuries ago. There is a picture belonging to the Church of the Madeleine in Paris—No. 37 in the catalogue. It has been ascribed to Van Eyck and Albert Dürer in turn. Experts may disagree. The work speaks to us still as it might have done had we been there when the nameless artist first painted his vision upon the panel; and we still respond to the noble, sweet sentiment, to the exquisite care and detail. The Virgin kneels in the long cathedral aisle; she is sumptuous in her damask robes, simple in her modest majesty; a cup with lilies stands on the pavement at her knee, a missal lies open on the carved reading-desk; an angel, with noble open looks and great wings, kneels before her from some inner shrine. The angel, too, is robed, and with upraised left hand he seems to emphasise his message. . . . The rays of light stream through a circular window overhead, each column is traced with care, each complicated arch is in its place, each shadow falls in exquisite beauty and perfection. No one is near, though

figures are to be seen at the far end of the vista.

Painted yesterday, the picture would be beautiful and touch one's admiration; coming to us through the centuries it brings added mystery, and reality, too. Perhaps angels were really to be seen crossing among the columns of the great cathedrals in those days; perhaps in those times ladies knelt like queens, wearing royal robes. The cathedrals are still there; the carvings are still to be admired—the quaint gurgoyles, the fanciful decorations, bats and birds and exquisite leaves carved in the stonework; and beyond it all, as you look, you somehow feel that the very spirit of Reverence is there.

"C'est très curieux," says the little French lady, shrugging her shoulders. She is a pretty little lady enough, with frills and furbelows; her husband has a ribbon in his coat. The people all about seem educated and well-bred. The women of the present, in their elaborate fanciful dresses, are scarcely less dainty than the saints and queens and Magdalenes they have come to see.

The French couples talk to each other with their pretty and rapid intonation. A nun in a dress which might have come bodily out of one of the pictures goes by, alone, carefully marking her catalogue. In a doorway under the mitred head of some saintly bishop the guardian of the place sits nodding peacefully.

"C'est du Ghirlandajo pur et simple," says an Elégante, gazing at one of Maître de Moulins's masterpieces. And while the human beings pass by discoursing, discriminating, the goodly company of the past remains indifferent, altogether oblivious of our presence . . . reading, praying, pondering; only a few of the martyrs look somewhat conscious, and no wonder. With what stately dignity yonder saint advances across the open place carrying his own glorified head which the executioner has just cut from his body, or let us admire the gracious women with their palms and jagged wheels, or Jean Perreal's slim and self-respecting lamb on its exquisite spindle legs.

"Where does he come from, that delicious master, whom for the moment we are obliged

to call by the ambiguous name of le Maître de Moulins?" says the author of the catalogue. "From Paris, from Tours, from Lyons, from Moulins? Did he see Italy?" asks M. Lafenestre, the writer of the admirable introduction.

"Par pitié Messieurs les archivistes nos amis," he cries, "un petit document, un tout petit document, s'il vous plaît, qui nous permette de saluer cet homme glorieux, de son vrai nom!"

Entering what one might call the *Salle carrée* of the Primitif Exhibition, there before one is a whole wall covered with the works of this so-called "Maître de Moulins." We are attracted at once by the master's great triptych, which hangs in the place of honour in the centre, and which the catalogue attributes to the year 1498.

In the middle panel stands the Virgin with the Child, surrounded by angels, and as the painter is fond of doing, he has represented the Holy Mother as she is described in the Apocalypse; the crescent moon is at her feet and the sunshine with which she is robed seems to radiate from out of this beautiful

picture. The grouping and painting of the attendant angels are very wonderful, not only for their value in the whole composition, but because each angel is a masterpiece. They stand with solemn eyes, directed towards the Holy Child, their hands clasped in fervent adoration. On the panels on either side St. Peter and St. Anne mount guard and present the donors of the picture to the holy company within.

Another picture, a Nativity by the same master, hangs near. The catalogue tells us that this painting was presented by the Cardinal Jean Rolin (we see his portrait in the picture itself) to the Cathedral of Autun, and that for more than four hundred years it has hung in the *évêché* until now brought to Paris for the first time, with the rare result that we find it after four centuries exactly as it was left by Maître de Moulins.

The feeling and spirit of this master's work remind one of some of the illuminated missals at the Bibliothèque Nationale close by. The landscapes of soft low hills and green valleys are strangely like those distances that Fouquet

loved to paint, and which through him we have got to know and understand, and it is very wonderful to find that what one had imagined to be the fairy land of Fouquet's brain is no fairy land but reality: France herself, only waiting now, as then, for her sons to come and paint her gracious aspects.

"Oh, what a power has whyte simplicity!" and this line of Keats's seems to embody in words what the Maître de Moulins effects in his most beautiful work of art.

The Virgin kneels before the Holy Child in the centre; on her right are St. Joseph and two angels (we recognise them again in the triptych); a little to the background, the donor also kneels, and a charming touch of nature is the introduction of the Cardinal's favourite fox-terrier on the hem of his robe.

"Une particularité," says the catalogue, "qui ferait reconnaître le Maître entre tous les autres, c'est la sévérité des physionomies, l'absence de sourire des Anges et de la Vierge," and this holds true even in his portraits. Take, for instance, *Une dame présentée par la Madelaine*, a beautiful though rather grim

achievement. P. M. admires, and A. M. declares it is like Memling in the scheme of colour, the posing of the figures, but the fact remains that the resemblance is but chance, and the spirit is French, and that no one but a Frenchman painting in France could have produced such a portrait.

We step into the cool ante-hall, where, facing us, is Froment's famous altar-piece, *Le Buisson Ardent.* This picture, with many of the others here exhibited, was attributed to the Flemish school, even to Van Eyck himself, because of the remarkable landscape in the centre panel. However, searching among the archives of "Bouches du Rhône," M. Blancard discovered documents which prove that *Le Buisson Ardent* was painted by Nicholas Froment at the command of King René for the cathedral at Aix, and that for so doing he received the sum of 30 *écus!*

High among the branches of a spreading tree, a graceful and lovely Virgin is sitting in state, while underneath, far beyond the boughs, lies an exquisite landscape. On one of the wings is the portrait of King René him-

self with his three saints, a fine group in gorgeous array. On the other wing is his queen, the daughter of Louis XI., Queen Jeanne de Laval, who is also presented to the Virgin by three protecting saints.

Not unlike other kings and queens, René and Jeanne seem to have had the same predilection for being constantly painted by the same hand. There are two separate miniatures of them by Froment, in which the head of the King is especially excellent in its way.

One might almost say that portraiture was an inherent gift among the French painters, and it is easy to see how the exquisite pictures of the sixteenth century which we find upstairs in this same collection belong by descent to the great masters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

The actual school of Nicholas Froment leaves one a little cold. "Fort curieux," as the lady said, is also the criticism of the catalogue concerning the picture of the saint carrying his head in his hands, and this is really all that can be said of Froment's pupils.

Near by are two pictures by another Primi-

tif, Jean Perreal? (The questioning mark is out of the catalogue.) This artist has a charming gift for details, and in *The Mystical Marriage of St. Catherine* the eye dwells with real pleasure upon the dainty architecture, the delicate trimming of St. Catherine's robe, and all the other charming belongings of the holy company. The heads of the figures are admirable; but the painter seems to have been unable to realise the human body, and the figures of the Virgin and St. Catherine are weak and feeble. Another painting of the Virgin and two donors by this same Perreal is a disappointment; the Virgin is beautiful and wonderfully painted, but the donors so ill executed that they spoil what would otherwise have been a remarkable work.

Fouquet, Enguerrand Charonton, and what one is obliged to call for want of more definite names the schools of Touraine, of Provence, of Bourgogne, are indeed words to conjure with, for they embody in sound this great school which now for the first time receives its proper recognition; nor must we leave the Pavillon

de Marsan without an act of homage to the great Maître de Flémalle who painted about 1430, fifty years before le Maître de Moulins. There are three pictures of his, each a masterpiece, and each beyond criticism. Perhaps Mr. Salting's *Virgin and Child* in an interior is the most beautiful for colour; but *The Adoration of the Shepherds* is the finest picture of the three, for in it there is perfection of noble thought as well as perfection of execution. In a thatched hut with angels hovering above, the Virgin is kneeling in adoration before the Holy Child. St. Joseph, holding a candle, which he shields from the wind with his right hand, kneels, and the shepherds, in a group, stand hesitating at the open door. Two women are in attendance on the Virgin, and are placed to her left so that the Holy Child lies encircled by noble figures, and then surrounding all is a great peaceful landscape with the rising sun just appearing over the mountain-top: the light is cool, grey, and mysterious, as it is to be seen just before the sun shoots out his rays to warm and cheer the world.

The third picture of Maître de Flémalle's is called *The Glorious Virgin, St. Peter, St. Augustin, and a Monk.* This is a little picture which reminds one of Van Eyck, and, though the picture is small, it has all his qualities of distance, breadth, and nobility of conception.

III

Before going up-stairs to the portraits on the higher floor you may, if you will, rest for a minute, in the ante-hall hung with its woven tapestries wreathed by a gay garland of embroidered fun and grace; they chiefly represent the *fêtes* of Henri III. Look at the courtiers assembled; while that ominous queen-mother sits in the centre of them all in deepest mourning. Look at the barges where the nobles and the king and some frail and brilliant Anne or misnamed Diana are assembled, while the huge fish with waving fins and a glorified tail beats the air, and the people dance on the distant banks and the music plays. Henry of Navarre is looking on in

gallant pourpoint and ruffle; so are other well-known figures and faces out of Alexandre Dumas. Who are the real historians? For France shall we quote Guizot and de Tocqueville and d'Aubigné, or rather Alexandre Dumas, who has made the Fronde to rise once more and Louis XIV. and his court to exist again?

In the upper gallery, where the portraits are hanging, all our old friends out of *The Three Musketeers* and the *Dame de Monsoreau* are to be recognised. There they are, with their handsome profiles and high delicate features, set off by their ruffles and feathered toques, the dashing chivalrous cut-and-come-again heroes, the Balafré, the Guises, Henri Quatre, the noble Coligny and his son-in-law Teligny, and there also are the conspirators, the lurid villains and villainesses—Mayenne the persecutor of Chicot, and those terrible women Catherine and Marie de Médicis, and the scheming Chevreuse and Diane de Poictiers, and the wild friends of Henri III., Anne, Duc de Joyeuse, and the rest of them, with their cropped heads and lordly airs. Here,

too, is Mazarin, who, it will be remembered with satisfaction, was lifted bodily, schemes, robes, and all, over the wall into captivity, by the strong arm of Porthos. The portraits seem to greet us or taunt us as we go by, so convincing and life-like are they. Their limners belonged to a time when art reigned supreme, a time of which the princes and nobles still live on, thanks to the Clouets, to Holbein, and his compeers who worked on quietly, with steady hands and keen eyes reproducing every line and aspect of the handsome dazzling gallants before them. The portraits tell their own history; but it is only of late that the compositions and altar-pieces have been docketed and named and dated. Only how can they be dated? A beautiful picture belongs to the great kingdom of art; and its name, be it Flemish or Burgundian, its date, be it one century or another, adds but little to its revelation.

M. Laborde, in his interesting work, *La Renaissance des Arts à la Cour de France*, gives a graphic description of the duties of the Court painter in the sixteenth century. The post

was first instituted in the Middle Ages, when it was ordained that the painter was to be classed with the servants, and to come in rank after the "palefreniers" and the "galopins de cuisine"; but with the march of civilisation the painter was promoted, and in the sixteenth century ranked with the poets, musicians, and fools of the Court. Briefly speaking, the painter's duty was to do everything, and he might be called from the stable, where he sat decorating the royal saddles with designs, to the kitchen to put finishing touches to the ornamented dishes which were to be set before the king.

Besides being painter to the Court, Jean Clouet obtained, through his intelligence and ready wit, the appointment of *Valet de Chambre du Roy*, a post much sought after, as it meant personal and real intercourse with the king.

There is no doubt that it was from holding this post that Clouet became so intimate with the Court. One can see from his portraits that his sitters were his friends, not merely models; that Clouet knew the ins and outs of

their characters, and in his inimitable way expressed, as far as plastic art could make it possible, almost all that there was to be said of the brilliant assemblage.

"Maîstre Janet Clouet painctre et valet de chambre ordinaire du Roy" was his full title. M. Laborde describes how it was then the custom to alter names, and that Jehan Clouet was turned into Jehannet Clouet, and then into plain Janet. Janet, unlike other followers of the brush, was well paid for his work, and he found in Francis a devoted and liberal master. He succeeded Jehan Bourdichon as Court painter. His reputation was great, and, besides private portraits, he had all the official portraits to paint. One gets an idea of the hurry and anxiety then shown to possess Janet's work, by a bill owing to Loys du Moulin which has been preserved. It is for diligences and post-horses, for going from Blois to Paris, and Paris to Blois, to fetch a portrait by the celebrated painter.

Janet was a great deal at Fontainebleau with the king, and in an old description of the Palais we read that numbers of Clouet's por-

traits hung on the walls, and there they seem to have remained until Louis Philippe had them removed to his historical museum at Versailles.

One of the most interesting things about Janet is that he stoutly resisted the Italian influence which Francis I. so admired, and, while Primatice and Rosso reigned supreme, Clouet worked quietly on his own lines, knowing well what his own work was worth. Portraits at this time were the craze of Europe, and it is through Janet they became the fashion in France. Holbein, too, was at work in England. There was no self-respecting family that had not been painted, and, as the fashion grew, books of portraits were sold, and no salon was considered complete without one of these on the table. These likenesses took the place of our present snapshots and *Daily Graphics*. They were often of great use; sovereigns and princes wishing to marry sent for the pictures of the most suitable princesses in Europe in order to choose the most beautiful among them.

Jean Clouet was succeeded by his son Fran-

çois, who, though not nearly so great a painter, enjoyed an even greater popularity. François's work was only to follow in the steps of his father, who had created the style, and, as we have already said, resisted Italian influence.

François became Court painter in 1545. Laborde tells us that his first duty was to go down to Rambouillet to take a cast of the dead king for an effigy, and his bill is quoted, which goes into minute details, "Despense de bouche" figuring principally among the items.

It was to François that Ronsard wrote the long and exquisite poem which begins: "Pein moy, Janet, pein moy je te suplie," and the rest of the Pleiade also offered up verses in the praise of this charming master.

As an example of the passion, or rather frenzy, for portraits which existed in those days, Brantôme tells a story of how Catherine de Médicis, being at Lyons, went to see the studio of a painter called Lyon—some of his work is still to be seen in this collection—and to her astonishment found upon his easel the most beautiful portrait imaginable of herself

as a young woman. She gazed in rapture and amazement, and could not remove her eyes for pleasure. Her bewilderment was lessened when the painter confessed that, though he had never seen her Majesty before, he had beheld a reproduction of her portrait, and had been so struck by it that he determined to paint another for himself. It is also known that Francis I. sent Titian a drawing of himself, and requested the artist to paint his portrait from it.

The secret of the Clouets' art seems to have died with François, whose work, though inferior, is no less alive than his father's. An interesting book of reproductions, edited by Lord Ronald Gower, from the Earl of Carlisle's collection at Castle Howard, contains hundreds of the portraits of the people we read of at that time, beginning with the royal house of Valois itself. Is it chance or is it the singular vividness of the Clouets' impressions which gives, even to the children's portraits of the later Valois, a strange tiger-like expression? The pale arching eyes, low frowning brows, seem to foretell the future. In the drawing of

Catherine de Médicis this sinister look is to be seen.

Francis I., with his well-known features, and his troubles, and his magnificence, has always been something of a favourite with the world. His stately buildings, his own odd yet distinguished looks, have made his personality so familiar to us that he has almost become a friend, and we refuse to believe all the things we read to his discredit. It is to the painters that he owes much of his popularity. Clouet has painted him with his pale southern face, his dark hair, the great nose, the narrow, self-conscious eyes, the beautiful hands which play with the hilt of that sword which he could wield with such chivalry, but with which he knew not how to lead. We hear how he modelled himself upon his favourite heroes of romance, how, when he was in prison, he sent for the Epistles of St. Paul and the history of Amadis of Gaul to read.

The story of his boys left by him as hostages to linger in captivity after the battle of Pavia is almost the saddest of all those which are told concerning him. Poor little hostages for

a treaty which Francis never fulfilled! One of them died, the other never quite recovered his spirits. So says Colonel Haggard in *Sidelights upon the History of France*, but the historian Clouet brings a very noble personage before our eyes in Henri II., with Francis's own dignity of carriage: he is mounted upon a splendid charger, and is riding in state. Henri II. is also nobly represented by his magnificent additions to Fontainebleau and to the Louvre.

Clouet paints many of his sitters at different ages, as children, and then young people. Men did not live to be very old in those days: there are few heads of aged men. There is one magnificent drawing of the great Connétable Anne de Montmorency, who lived from one reign to another; also one of another sitter, poor little Jeanne de Navarre, of whom the melancholy story is told how, when she was about nine years old, she was repeatedly struck and beaten to force her into a marriage notwithstanding her passionate protests. When the day of the ceremony came she was so loaded with brocade and precious stones

and heavy chains that she could not walk, and, according to the custom of the time, the poor little bride was carried into the church. The Connétable de Montmorency, that grand seigneur, was selected for this office, which so angered and disgusted him that he left the Court in high dudgeon, and gave up for a time all his dignities and appointments.

There is one exquisite little head of Queen Mary Stuart at a very early age, delicate and sprightly—la Reine Dauphine, as she was called—and there is a charming portrait of the beautiful Duchesse d'Etampes, looking innocent and girlish, whose quarrel with Diane de Poictiers divided the Court.

These Primitifs have been tolerant of human limitations. There are few dull blots; almost everything is beautiful enough to belong to the present and the future indeed, too, as well as to the past, and as one looks, one realises that all this has been in the world for five hundred years to give joy to the living mirage sweeping past that one depicted on the canvas.

But the clock strikes twelve, the shadows

grow short; P. M. and A. M. sadly leave this charming world, and turn their faces towards their own English home, where, under different skies, and perhaps in a more sober mood, there are also no less beautiful things to admire and noble collections of pictures to study.

No. X

"JACOB OMNIUM"

I

"A gent both good and trew"

On one of the landings of the staircase of the National Gallery, at the entrance of the rooms devoted to British Art, hangs a picture by Gainsborough representing a family group. It is painted with all the full and harmonious sense of colour for which that painter is remarkable, and, besides its artistic merits, it reproduces that individual personality which Gainsborough seized so wonderfully at times, and which the greatest painters can convey to us, in some unexplained and yet undeniable manner.

The family is that of Mr. James Baillie, who

was a younger son of the Baillies of Dochfour, and the picture must have been painted in the last years of the eighteenth century. It is, in truth, a charming composition; and an original one too, even though the usual garden background is there, and the well-known curtain hangs from the marble column. The father, in the dress of the period, with wig and with knee-breeches, stands stately and well-proportioned upon a step; at his right sits the mother of the family, with her youngest child on her knee and the others clustering round her. Mrs. Baillie is not handsome, but looks, nevertheless, imposing and attractive. She sits in some dignity, dressed in her handsome fringed robes, with a satin shoe appearing from beneath the ample skirts.

Beside her are her daughters; the eldest a maiden of about thirteen, with dark eyes like the father, and wearing a tall, feathered hat, beneath which her hair falls loosely. In after years she was to be the mother of the great "Jacob Omnium." Next to her is a younger sister, with a merry, round face, which has descended to another generation; and there is

also the usual fascinating little boy of those days, who, in his blue vest and buttons and little trousers, is looking up at the baby in the mother's lap. The stately gentleman was the grandfather of Matthew James Higgins, otherwise "Jacob Omnium," and the likeness between the generations is certainly very remarkable. But, good-looking as Mr. Baillie must have been, Gainsborough, had he lived to paint it, might have made a still handsomer picture of the grandson.

It was the little boy, known later as Mr. Alexander Baillie, who left this picture for life to his nephew, Mr. Higgins, and then to the National Gallery, where it now hangs in honour.

History has a way of telling her stories backwards. It is interesting to recognise dignity, wit, kindliness, a certain friendly authority that one remembers in the nineteenth century, recorded in the distant eighteenth century by its master-hand.[1] Here too is a presentment of the Higgins family itself

[1] How many such records, given to it by the generous hand of Watts, the twentieth century will look upon!

not as yet in existence—the two daughters, the son, the kind parents, in suitable surroundings.

The best likeness, perhaps, that was done of "Jacob Omnium" is one from a photograph, which records his well-modelled features, calmly humorous, and restrained. The other portrait engraved in the *Memoir* is an excellent full-length sketch by Sir Francis Grant, with a little toy-terrier introduced by Sir Edwin Landseer. This portrait gives a good impression of Mr. Higgins's great and remarkable height. I can remember seeing my father looking up at him as the two walked away together along Young Street. Carlyle called my father a Cornish giant once, and Mr. Higgins he dubbed Eupeptic giant. Not being eupeptic himself, grim Thomas seemed to disapprove of tall men and of many other obvious and inevitable facts. Mr. Higgins's was a harmonious and finely modelled figure; I could not have believed from my remembrance that he was six foot eight inches in height, if I had not read it in his *Memoir*—that "excellent *Memoir*," as Sir Leslie Stephen calls it, written

with so much affection by a good friend, Sir William Stirling-Maxwell.

Some people have an ear for music, an eye for colour; others, in the same way, have an interest in their fellow-creatures, a critical opinion concerning them, and "Jacob Omnium" was one of these; and so was Sir William, who wrote of him.

II

One has heard the story of the infant in a cradle who witnessed a theft committed by his nurse, and who resolved to tell of it as soon as he was old enough to speak intelligibly. In this way "Paterfamilias" seems at a very early age to have had an opinion upon the affairs of life, and he certainly did not hesitate to expose the wrongs he had observed when the time was ripe to do so. A boy who began at fourteen years of age to have his own ideas upon education was surely born to be a critic. He says: "I used often to doubt, when called off from my studies at Harchester to mend my master's fire, to prepare his meals, or to brush

his clothes, whether a system which permitted and upheld such practices could really be beneficial either to him or to me." These early conclusions he epitomised in later times, when the well-known letters by "Paterfamilias" about Eton came out in the *Cornhill Magazine*. They were written vividly, and from personal experience of the noble old stronghold of tradition and prejudice and good faith. More than one master took up the challenge. "Paterfamilias" replied to the replies. His third letter, published in the *Cornhill Magazine* for March, 1861, is headed by a quotation from Paul Louis Courier which is too amusing not to be quoted at length:

"Je voudrais bien répondre à ce professeur [says the eminent Frenchman], car, comme vous savez, j'aime assez causer. Je me fais tout à tous, et ne dédaigne personne; mais je le crois fâché. Il m'appelle jacobin, révolutionnaire, plagiaire, voleur, empoisonneur, faussaire, pestifère ou pestiaire, enragé, imposteur, calomniateur, libelliste, homme horrible, ordurier, grimacier, chiffonnier. C'est tout, si j'ai mémoire. Je vois ce qu'il veut dire;

il entend que lui et moi sont d'avis différent; et c'est là sa manière de s'exprimer."

When the Eton master, justly claiming remuneration for much arduous work, describes the occupation "as one repulsive and irksome to most men," and complains that "it mars their chances of marrying," "Paterfamilias," with grave amusement, observes that this gentleman's complaint is certainly not flattering for the wives of his colleagues.

"Paterfamilias" writes as he talked perhaps, as a man of six foot eight inches would naturally do, with a certain authority, which in his case was tempered by a strong sense of humour; and yet his trenchant decisions were almost always for the good of the world—to help the oppressed, to set wrong right. Other men's heads did not obscure his view, though he may have too hastily overlooked them.

The *Memoir* gives the dates and facts of Mr. Higgins's early life. He was born at Benown Castle, in the county of Meath. He was educated at Bath and at Eton, and afterwards he went to New College, Oxford. His mother, the little girl in the tall hat, was early left a

widow with several daughters and this one son. The daughters married in Italy and settled at Naples. I can remember, as a girl, calling with my father upon one of them, a very tall lady, with all the Bay of Naples shining through the windows of her reception-room; and I am told there are still tall and handsome Italian gentlemen, her sons and nephews, with the features and the stature of my father's old friend and companion.

Mr. Higgins as a young man after leaving college went off to the West Indies. He was heir to an estate, which he twice visited at intervals, finding, as we read, "that his plausible attorney and gentlemanly manager were actively making away with his substance." But they seem literally to have reckoned without their host, who, on his arrival, speedily got rid of them and brought his tangled affairs into order.

III

Soon after Mr. Higgins's return from Demerara, in 1847, the famine in Ireland was at

its height. He offered his services to the relief committee in England. Others worked hard through that cruel time; Sir Aubrey de Vere, Mr. John Ball, and many more names will be remembered. Mr. Higgins was with those who were sent out to the coast of Mayo with supplies for the starving people. They were conveyed thither by H.M.S. *Terrible.* They landed at Erris, a promontory stretching into the Atlantic:

"The shores were washed by water abounding in fish, but there was not a wherry or fishing smack in the entire barony. Six thousand were supposed to have perished by starvation, the land-owners all but two were bankrupt in purse or in character . . . men, women, and children were dying daily in the village streets and on the roadsides. Mr. Higgins and his associate, Mr. Bynoe, a naval surgeon, were besieged at once for food, clothing, and coffins. . . . When at last the local committee had got into perfect order, the greatest vigilance was required to prevent the resources provided from being wasted, intercepted, applied to the payment of wages, etc."

The letters of Mr. Higgins corroborate the complaints of the relief commissioners. In April, 1847, "Jacob Omnium" sent a letter to the *Times* so eloquent, so incisive, that even now, after sixty years, it still stings and stirs the reader. To understand the Irish, Sir M. E. Grant-Duff tells us on good authority, a man must be born again, and of an Irish mother. The present writer may claim this latter right to realise the strange mixture of fire and apathy, of imagination and hopeless fatalism, which belongs to the Irish character, and which at that trying time roused the just indignation of "Jacob Omnium." Fatalism was no part of his creed. To bestir himself, to administer, to hold the reins firmly, came naturally to him. He might have been an Irishman for spirit and kindness and enterprise; he certainly was a typical Scotchman for painstaking and conscientiousness. What the work was which he had to carry out may be imagined from the following statement at the end of his letter:

". . . Lest I may be suspected of exaggeration I will, in conclusion, set down what my

eyes have seen during the last half-hour. I have seen in the court-house an inquest held on the body of a boy aged thirteen, who, being left alone in a cabin with a little rice and fish in his charge, was murdered by his cousin, a boy of twelve, for the sake of that wretched pittance of food. A verdict of wilful murder has since been returned. The culprit is the most famished and sickly little creature I ever saw, and his relatives, whom I heard examined, were all equally emaciated and fever-stricken."

Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, in concluding this melancholy chapter, writes as follows:

"The Irishmen of 1847 were very angry with Lord John Russell for exhorting them to adopt the maxim, 'Help yourselves, and Heaven will help you'; but the lessons of the famine have not been wholly lost, even upon this generation."

On his return to England during the general election of 1847, Mr. Higgins stood for Westbury as a Peelite. He was defeated by Mr. James Wilson, afterwards Finance Minister in India, with a majority of twenty-one. A daughter of the Rt. Hon. James Wilson tells

me that she can remember being taken to a window to see the election, and she still remembers her father speaking, and Mr. Higgins's remarkable figure standing on the hustings, and the excited coachmen of the opposite factions driving into one another, so that the little frightened girl burst into tears and was carried away by her nurse. Mr. Higgins never again stood for a seat in Parliament, though, as we read, "his interest in public affairs continued unabated, and there were few figures more familiar than his in the lobby or under the gallery of the House of Commons."

IV

In 1850, Mr. Higgins married Mrs. Benet, a daughter of Sir Henry Tichborne.

It must have been in the spring of 1850 that my father, sitting down to write a letter at the club, found the impression in Mr. Higgins's writing of an envelope addressed to this lady. Amused and interested by the confirmation of rumours which had reached him, he cut out

the page and sent it to his friend. Early one summer afternoon my sister and I went with him to call at Mr. Higgins's house in Lowndes Square just before the marriage. There were several people in the room, but I most of all remember the soft laughing eyes and the white bonnet of the bride to be.

As I have said, my father and "Jacob Omnium" were friends and companions both before and after this marriage. They liked the same amusements, they had the same interests. Is it not well known how they went together to visit a celebrated giant, and were admitted free of charge as belonging to the fraternity? They fancied the same toys, old china, bric-a-brac, among the rest, and one spring morning a cab drove up to our door in Onslow Square loaded with a delightful gift from "Jacob Omnium's" store to ours. Dresden and Oriental pieces there were, a cauliflower in china worth its weight in gold. One mug remains to this day intact upon my table—a cup in which some of us may still drink to the past.

Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, writing of Mr.

Higgins, recalls the well-assorted little dinners both of his bachelor days and in later life; the breakfasts to the Philo-biblion Society, and those rarer Derby-day occasions at which half-a-dozen friends, "agreeing, perhaps, in nothing but good-fellowship, used to meet for the great summer holiday." He quotes the names of Sir John Simeon, of my father, of Sir Edwin Landseer, John Leech, Count de Montalembert. I remember a brake calling one fine Derby morning at my father's door, into which he mounted and cheerfully drove away, leaving us looking out from our schoolroom window with a general sense of excitement and holiday in the air, since even the grown-up people were out enjoying themselves.

I come upon one and another record of Mr. Higgins's name in old papers and letters of that time. "When I took leave of you last night on Higgins's doorstep," writes Richard Doyle in a farewell letter to my father, who had just started for America. This must have been a last parting dinner to the traveller in the autumn of 1854. "Mr. Higgins met me in the park with baby," Mrs. Brookfield

"JACOB OMNIUM" AND MARSHAL PÉLISSIER

From a Drawing by Richard Doyle

writes, "and asked me if I would not come and dine with them; but I could not leave home." How these chance words bring the reality of past days before one!

Only yesterday, opening a book at hazard, I read an amusing note of a conversation that once was held recorded by Sir M. E. Grant-Duff. "Imagine," said Sir George Trevelyan, speaking of ancient Athens, "a society in which it was quite the natural thing to discuss at great length whether 'Jacob Omnium' was taller than another man by bigness or by two feet!"

This allusion must have been at a time when "Jacob Ominum's" name had long become familiar to the world at large. "His early letters were never passed over," says his biographer. They seem to have been quoted with respect, and irritation, too; they never failed to make their mark.

One only book of *Social Essays* contains most of his longer articles. A terrible story, called *Captain Jack*, refers to his West Indian experiences. The history of "Jacob Omnium" first appeared in the *New Monthly*

Magazine in 1845. The paper attracted so much attention that the name ever after remained to its author. My father was writing in the same magazine at the time, and he and Mr. Higgins both simultaneously applied to the editor to make them known to one another.

Again and again, as one reads what "Jacob Omnium" has written, one is reminded of the author of *The Great Hoggarty Diamond*, of the *Snob Papers*, of the earlier chapters of my father's writing; on one occasion Mr. Higgins must have actually written two pages of the *Book of Snobs*. At another he himself supplied the story for a very well-known poem.

V

Most people know the *Ballads of Peeceman X*, and the song of "Jacob Homnium's Hoss":

> One sees in Viteall Yard,
> Vere pleacemen do resort,
> A wenerable hinstitute—

'T is called the Pallis Court.
A gent 'as got his i on it;
I think 'twill make some sport.

A horse belonging to Mr. Higgins had been stolen from Tattersall's by means of a forged letter. This horse was cleverly recognised by his groom and recovered in the streets of London. The thief, who had been keeping the horse at livery, found it convenient to disappear, and the stablekeeper then brought an action against Mr. Higgins for the animal's keep, which Mr. Higgins naturally refused to pay. The cause was tried, says Sir William, in a small and ancient local court called "The Palace Court." I am told that it was a relic of the times when the Sovereign was supposed to hold her own private court of justice, and has been now finally abolished.

Pleaceman X tells the story:

The dreadful day of trile
In the Pallis Court did come;
The lawyers said their say,
The Judge looked wery glum,
And then the British Jury cast
Poor Jacob Hom-ni-um.

O, a weary day was that
For Jacob to go through;
The debt was two-seventeen
(Which he no mor owed than you),
And then there was the plaintives costs,
Eleven pound six and two.

And then there was his own,
Which the lawyers they did fix
At the wery moderit figgar
Of ten pound one and six.
Now Evins bless the Pallis Court,
And all its bold ver-dicks!

Every one must sympathise with the feelings of Pleaceman X for "Jacob Omnium" when he exclaims,

If *I* 'd committed crimes,
Good Lord, I would n't 'ave that man
Attack me in the *Times!*

The differences of our contemporaries often amuse and interest us, but their cordial understandings and sympathies do one good to dwell upon. I do not allude to mutual admiration societies, which are apt to exhaust one's attention, but to that pride in good work carried through, that love for generous lives lived

simply to the end, which will always ring true.

"Busy as he was [I am again quoting], he was ever ready to prove himself a friend in need, a counsellor in difficulty, a comforter in affliction. His long practice in weighing evidence enabled him often to mediate in disputes, and though in his literary vocation he was a man of many controversies, in his private capacity he was the author of not a few reconciliations."

As I read this most just tribute in Sir William Stirling-Maxwell's pages, there comes back to my mind a message from Mr. Higgins, written years and years ago, just after my father's death.

The note is almost too intimate to print, and yet it gives so true a picture of the writer and does such honour to friendship that I cannot but allude to it now. Mr. Higgins had written to ask us who was advising us and had sent various practical and admirable suggestions, and I, in return, had sent him a letter we had just received, which we valued very much.

He says:

"It is impossible for man to write a wiser or kinder letter than Mr. Merivale has written to you. I was afraid when I first wrote to you that in your grief you might entrust your affairs to kind but incompetent hands, and might then be perplexed how to extricate yourself from them. As it is, I can only say that whenever I may die I should be very happy to think that my children had at their side such an adviser and assistant as Mr. Merivale, and that you cannot do better than rely on him fully at all points. . . .

"Good-bye. God bless you, and enable you to bear up bravely against the heavy blow which has been so suddenly inflicted on you."

If I may refer to such personal matters, I may add that we had other good advisers and helpers. One of them, Mr. George Smith, was also Mr. Higgins's friend, who himself belonged to that race of men with an instinct for human beings. Mr. George Smith trusted and admired his stately contributor, and liked to take counsel with him about both literary and public affairs. Specially when the *Pall*

Mall Gazette was started did he consult him. Mr. Higgins wrote many of the "Occasional Notes" which the new periodical was the first to issue. "Occasional Notes" are now in every newspaper, but they are not quite "Jacob Omnium's."

VI

When "Jacob Omnium" ceased to write for the *Times*—it was a disagreement about military matters which brought the long connection to an end—his serious contributions continued to appear in the *Cornhill Magazine*, as well as in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Army reform, school reform, social reform, all interested him, and it is curious to note with what just instinct he seemed to seize upon the problems of the hour and to suggest the possible remedies.

What a variety of subjects he grasped! We owe to him the introduction of steam-rollers in the London streets, brought about by his sympathy with the sufferings of the horses under his window. Administrative reform was one of his hobbies. The Public Schools Com-

mission followed upon his articles in the *Cornhill Magazine*. Only yesterday, sitting in a Surrey garden, with an horizon of autumn hills and a foreground of flowering lawns, I heard something I had never known before from a friend with whom I have many memories in common.

This is what Mrs. Murray Smith told me: One day Mr. Higgins descended the steps of his club and found the road wet and impassable after a recent shower. His intention had been to cross over to a great store on the opposite side of the street, and to buy some soda for a bath, an antidote for gout which had been recommended by his doctor. Not caring to walk through the mud, he called to a barefooted boy, and, putting a shilling into his hand, desired him to cross the road and to make the purchase. The boy returned with the soda and a handful of change, and Mr. Higgins asked him whether he had understood that he was intended to pay for the goods. The boy declared that he had paid all that had been asked; with the result that Mr. Higgins, on his return home, sent for the

household books, and found that the sum usually charged for soda was many times in excess of that which had been asked from the little sweeper. This was the origin of the first start of Co-operative Stores, so vigorosuly advocated by "Jacob Omnium" in the columns of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. So much my friend told me, and she smiled as she added, with a remembrance of those past days, the trades resented this correspondence and withdrew their advertisements from the *Pall Mall Gazette* in consequence. The public certainly benefited, but the newspaper and its owner suffered.

At one time "Jacob Omnium" was strenuously opposed to that great "Historicus" whose loss a nation has lately mourned. It would be almost too sad to dwell on all these names, on those vanished hands that have so long toiled for others and have made straight the devious ways, were it not for the grasp of the living. But it would be as foolish to weep for the children who once played in the old garden, and who are now busy men and women, at work in the world, as only to

lament instead of rejoicing for those who have passed their way through honoured life to rest.

I cannot conclude better than by an extract from one of Mr. Higgins's essays, a description of old Chelsea Hospital:

"At half-past ten on Sunday morning I applied for admittance at the east gate of the Hospital, where sat a guard of old men clad in a costume which recalled to my mind Hogarth's picture of the *March to Finchley*. Being readily admitted I proceeded to the main quadrangle, where I found the pensioners mustering for church parade. Men maimed by every variety of mutilation under which life could be retained were slowly gathering from the various wards. Empty sleeves, wooden legs, bent backs, and disfigured features bore witness that these gallant fellows had dearly bought not the ease—for that few of them have health to know—but the repose which they enjoy.

"Amidst all these signs of bodily weakness and infirmity I remarked an erectness of carriage and a neatness of dress which proved

that neither age nor sickness could eradicate habits acquired by long service. You could read in every man's face that he respected himself and knew his own worth, and was proud that his country had recognised it. . . . The sound of drums and fifes broke in upon my reverie.

"The old men formed a double line on either side of the gravel walk, and the governor of the Hospital, preceded by a blind drummer and two octogenarian fifers, and accompanied by the officers of the establishment, appeared on the parade. . . . The pensioners were closely examined by their governor, as he limped along their most accurate line, with an air rather of affectionate interest than of official scrutiny.

"Before they broke for chapel word was passed down their ranks that a pair of green spectacles had been picked up and was in the hands of the adjutant. An ophthalmic Egyptian limped forth and claimed them, thus characteristically concluding this singular military spectacle."

Then "Jacob Omnium" describes the chapel:

" 'Gloomy but handsome,' the altar draped on either side with the banners of Hyder Ali and Tippoo Saib. . . . Sixteen Imperial eagles adorn the walls and attest the prowess of these soldiers, of whom these veterans were once the flower. The body of the church is entirely filled by the pensioners; a single line of pews carried along the walls on either side accommodates the officers of the hospital and their families.

"It happened at the time I visited the place that these families contained several young women of great beauty; and never did female youth and loveliness stand forth more conspicuously than when contrasted with the Rembrandt-like heads and shattered frames of these venerable soliders."

He goes on to praise "the manly, straightforward, and kind-hearted appeals to common-sense of Mr. Gleig, the chaplain. . . . What shall I say of the congregation?" he adds, having thus eulogised the clergyman.

"In most assemblies of men we know, to our cost, if we have lived long enough, that the majority are but of average merit, that

many sink below mediocrity, and that few rise above it.

"But here, amidst this strange collection of cripples, all have been actually tried in the fire and not found wanting; all have approved themselves brave, obedient, faithful, have undergone severe and bloody trials in every quarter of the globe, wherever their duty led them, and have been fortunate to have their merits recognised and their toils rewarded by the *otium cum dignitate* of Chelsea. Hackneyed as that phrase is, I know of none other which so well expresses the position of these meritorious servants of England."

There is something that reminds us of *The Newcomes* in this restrained and yet most effective picture of the peaceful place, which remains, happily, unchanged from the days when "Jacob Omnium's" stately figure trod its sunny old courts.

The following note by Mrs. Yates Thompson, the eldest daughter of Mr. George M. Smith, tells its own story and adds to mine.—A. I. R.

The amount of Mr. M. J. Higgins's writing for the *Pall Mall Gazette* is shown by the fact that while regular contributors such as W. R. Greg, Lord Strangford, and Leslie Stephen occupy five pages each in the contributors' ledger for the first two years, and J. Fitzjames Stephen has as many as thirteen pages, M. J. Higgins requires thirty of the large pages, all written in my father's beautiful clear hand. His first article appeared a week after the paper started, and his last on the day he was taken ill—six days before he died. At first there were not so many "Occasional Notes"—only thirteen in May, 1865—but he seemed soon to take possession of that department, and in May, 1866, there were sixty-six written by him. It was quite an ordinary thing for him to write six, or eight, or ten "Occasional Notes" a day, and the curious variety of subjects is fairly shown by the following entries for two days in 1867:

Public-houses.
U. S. Presidents.
Photography of Corpses.
Gutta Percha Ears.
The Ship *Diana*.
Agricultural Labourers.

Telegraph Correspondent.
Lectures by a Corporal.
Condition of Naples.
Mont Cenis Railway.
Fenian Ringleaders.
Miracle of St. Januarius.
Hall of Arts and Sciences.
Bishop of Salisbury.
Steam Locomotive in Rome.
Health of Prince Imperial.

His first contribution to the *Pall Mall Gazette* was a long letter—"Locked in"—giving a lively account of his service as a juryman and a forcible exposure of the abuses of the system. He wrote a few leaders and now and then a review, and, besides the "Occasional Notes," "Correspondence" was always a favourite method of his. On serious questions, such as a long controversy with Sir Samuel Baker on the negro question, he wrote as "J. O."; but he used endless pseudonyms, often writing a letter, on the Eton holidays, for instance, as "A Mother of Six," and answering it as "A Father of Four." To name but a few, he appears as "A Widow," "A Veteran," "Rose du Barri," "Materfamilias," "Equestris," "Belgravian." Do you remember yourself, as "Martha Query," stirring him up to an-

swer, as "Monitor," a question about "Gratuities to Servants"? At one time he carried on a correspondence in French as "Sanson" of Leicester Square.

Perhaps his favourite signature was "Common Sense." No abuses, small or great, seemed to escape him, and he attacked them with a mixture of earnestness, playful wit, and good sense which generally seems to have been successful. Anything connected with Eton, from the headmastership down to "Schoolboy Tippling"; anything to do with horses, from steeplechases to the macadam in the London streets; any case of legal oppression or official incompetence found him on the alert.

The power he exercised is well shown by his correspondence on "Our Grocers." On January 13, 1868, he took up the question of the overcharges of West End grocers, and in a series of letters from "Providus," "A Housekeeper," "A Victim," "A Country Grocer," besides many editorial notes, worked the subject for a month, and on February 12th was able to publish a circular from many of the leading West End grocers reducing their prices

to those of the Co-operative Stores. He did not actually start the Co-operative Stores, which, as he mentions, had been begun two years previously, but by this correspondence he gave them a much greater vogue.

I have read a great many of Mr. Higgins's contributions to try to choose something that might be worth copying for you, but most of the subjects are dead and gone, and detached scraps give little idea of the scope and vivacity of his daily work.

E. A. M. T.

No. XI

MRS. GASKELL

I

Two old friends, we will call them "M." and "N.," were talking of Mrs. Gaskell one day not long ago as they drove along a green Surrey lane. It was shaded from the sultry August sunshine by spreading oaks and beeches, and led, as Surrey lanes do lead, from one sweet rural distance to another, from one peaceful common to another, from dazzling light to shade. The drive had been long and peaceful, and the horses' feet fell tranquilly and rapidly in cadence, until out of the sunset they brought the two ladies into twilight. Once when the road turned the carriage passed by an open pond still reflecting all the lovely lights and dying colours over-

head. "M.," who had taken "N." for this charming expedition, began remembering how Mrs. Gaskell, too, had once delighted in driving on and on, and how, and with what pleasure to them all, a little journey had been planned long ago—a scheme for taking her by road through two or three beautiful counties that she wished to see. There were to be relays of horses in waiting, and the drive was to last for several days. Mrs. Gaskell had delighted in the prospect and in talking it over. But this was in the autumn of 1865, and it was but a happy fancy never to be fulfilled. "M." spoke of this and of many meetings more happily realised, and still to be dwelt upon.

"N." said she had met Mrs. Gaskell once or twice only, but always as a friend, and with natural warm admiration for the writer of the books she had loved from her girlhood, and still loved and enjoyed as ever; but that only one or two very clear impressions remained to her of Mrs. Gaskell herself, that most memorable and interesting woman.

Then "M." answered thoughtfully: "Few people have ever more deserved to be remem-

bered. Many have written of her and spoken of her, but they have scarcely ever expressed her altogether as she was. They have scarcely rendered the remarkable *charm* of her presence, the interest of all she said, or of her vivid memory, of her delightful companionship."

"M." spoke with some emotion and with that beautiful fidelity of friendship which all who know her will ever recognise; and then she went on to describe something more of what Mrs. Gaskell's life had been, apart from her literary life—her fellowship for those among whom she lived, her good sense and administrative faculty, her bright intuitions, and also the extraordinary ability she had shown in all she had instigated. More than once during her life there she had seen Manchester at a cruel pass. Hard times had been succeeded by "turbulence, by intimidation, and fall in wages"; then, in 1862, came the Lancashire cotton famine, and all that Mrs. Gaskell and her husband achieved with the help of their own girls is still remembered. Hers was the spirit which flung itself into surrounding lives, adding how much to them! There was

one special enterprise among others for selling milk in the poorer quarters of Manchester, at a time when milk was scarcely to be had at all for the poor. "This," said "M.," "was a most marked and successful venture among the many generous intelligent charities unaffectedly carried on by Mrs. Gaskell and those belonging to her."

One remembrance "M." and "N." found they had in common. "N." has already written of a certain gusty morning long ago, when a party of ladies sat indoors listening not to the wind, but to Mrs. Gaskell, as she told them ghost stories. "She spoke of Scotch ghosts, historical ghosts, spirited ghosts with faded uniforms and nice old powdered queues." "N." is quoting from her own bygone notes. The little party was on a visit to Oak Hill Lodge at Hampstead, where Mr. and Mrs. George Smith were then living, and where certain grown-up men and women of to-day were playing as infants on the lawn of a sloping garden. As the hours went on the wind abated, and presently the hosts and their friends came outside to sit under the

trees in the open air, and the one central figure still talked on most charmingly to the rest. The voice seemed almost present once again as "M." and "N." recalled it all—a delicate enunciation, singularly clear and cultivated, a harmonious note moved by a laugh now and then, and restrained by a certain shyness, that shyness which belongs to sensitive people who feel what others are feeling almost too quickly, and are at times suddenly hindered by the vibration. On that well-remembered day Mrs. Gaskell had gone on telling the stories as her listeners asked for them. There were legends of smugglers as well as of ghosts, adventures too, stories with weather in them, wild snowstorms rising and dying away. There is one ghost story in *Sylvia's Lovers* which is told by Sylvia's father, and which might have well been one of those that were recounted then. It is that of a traveller driving in the dark along a lonely place, when he suddenly becomes aware of the presence of his dead brother in the cart beside him, and as he drives on wondering into moonlight, two threatening figures sud-

denly rise up from behind the hedge, and he hears a muttered oath: "What, two of them!" And the robbers hesitate and fall back, and he passes on in safety, and then he realises that his protector is there no more.

Leslie Stephen came walking down the garden with Mr. Thurstan Holland, Mrs. Gaskell's own son-in-law to be, on that special day as we all sat listening, and the talk became general, and reality began when the story-telling came to an end. This must have been in the autumn of 1864.

II

Once, only a year before, Mrs. Gaskell had come with one of her daughters to see us in my father's house, and I can just remember her talking to him in the big dining-room at Palace Green, looking up laughing, inquiring, responding, gay, yet definite—such is the impression I have of her presence. Nor do I forget the motherly letter, full of truest warmth and expression of feeling, in which, after our father's death, she invited us to stay at Man-

chester, to come to that home in Plymouth Grove in which, for years and years to be, such true hospitality, such life-long friendship, awaited me and mine.

My father died in 1863. Within two years Mrs. Gaskell also died, at about the same age. He "laid the weary pen aside," but she did not seem weary; she was at work and at play almost to the last, and living her full life, with all its cares and joys, its achievements, and anxieties, and labours for others. She had failed a little, so we read—I am again quoting from the interesting biographical introduction to the new edition of her books—and then the end came very suddenly, as she was talking to her children.

She had just finished, or all but finished, the last, most mature and lovable of all her books. To people of an elder generation rereading *Wives and Daughters* now, strong, gentle, and full of fun and wisdom, all youth seems to be in it; it is rest to live again in the merry touching pages.

I remember hearing one of Mrs. Gaskell's daughters say that before beginning a book her

mother never failed to write down at length the sketch of the story that was to be. She took care to have it all safe, and to mark ahead the incidents and the characters, and she kept to her plans. This presence and prescience of mind was a gift of no less use to her in her imaginative than in her active life. Other authors, less capable, indeed, write and rewrite their intentions, and then find it impossible to keep to them; they go here and there divagating, breathlessly pursuing deluding will-o'-the-wisps. But as one thinks over the books which Mrs. Gaskell produced, each so different, each so complete in turn, one is struck by her harmonious definiteness, and by the precision of detail, as well as by the breadth of her horizons.

III

What a natural song is that of the people who are born with a gift for expression, for "admiring rightly." Of the people who have listened to the many chords of life, who have gratefully enjoyed and delighted in them,

almost unconsciously discriminating in their admiration, discovering new secrets of happiness year by year.

They have passed on their way, perhaps, but they have not died with all their music in them; their signs, their thoughts, their voices are here; they are teaching still and repeating the varied aspects of this world, to the generations in turn, as when King David looked up at the heavens and showed them to us, where one day telleth another and one night certifieth another, where there is neither speech nor language, but their voices are heard among them. So the revelation still continues, and goes out into all lands.

And, besides that gift of creation which belongs more specially to the race of poets, there is another power somewhat different in kind—that of vivid realisation. Some writers create their characters and rule over this dream-world of theirs as Prospero did in his island; others seem to be rather the servants of their imaginations, and to be governed by their own fantasies. George Eliot was Shakespearean in the fact that she never seemed to

become *subject* to her creations; she was not afraid of being dull, she watched them from afar. She was not Dorothea any more than she was Milly Barton, or Catarina. Only once in Maggie Tulliver does she seem to be writing of herself. Mrs. Oliphant, in a like way, following on the steps of her beloved Sir Walter, never seems to be subject to her varied crowding characters, to the thronging eager companies of lads and lasses, and elders, and commentators. She, too, ruled in her kingdom.

But Mrs. Gaskell belongs to the other school; hers is a different inspiration and method. She seems for a time almost to *be* the character she is creating. Take Ruth, take Mr. Hale or Margaret, take, for instance, Sylvia's lover Philip Hepburn, walking home on New Year's eve along Monkshaven Common. The author not only knows what Philip, despairing of Sylvia's love, must have felt; she sees with his eyes, thinks with his thoughts.

Take that description of the merry-making at Corneys', and of Philip's return to the little town:

"Shutting the door behind him, he went out into the dreary night and began his lonesome walk back to Monkshaven. The cold sleet almost blinded him as the sea-wind drove it straight in his face; it cut against him as it was blown with drifting force. The roar of the wintry sea came borne on the breeze; there was more light from the whitened ground than from the dark laden sky above. The field-paths would have been a matter of perplexity had it not been for the well-known gaps in the dykeside, which showed the whitened land beyond, between the two dark stone walls. Yet he went clear and straight along his way, having unconsciously left all guidance to the animal instinct which co-exists with the human soul, and sometimes takes strange charge of the human body, when all the nobler powers of the individual are absorbed in acute suffering. At length he was in the lane, toiling up the hill, from which, by day, Monkshaven might be seen. Now all the features of the landscape before him were lost in the darkness of night, against which the white flakes came closer and nearer, thicker and faster. On a

sudden, the bells of Monkshaven Church rang out a welcome to the new year, 1796. From the direction of the wind, it seemed as if the sound was flung with strength and power right into Philip's face. He walked down the hill to its merry sound—its merry sound, his heavy heart. As he entered the long High Street of Monkshaven he could see the watching lights put out in parlour, chamber, or kitchen. The new year had come, and expectation was ended. Reality had begun.

"He turned to the right, into the court where he lodged with Alice Rose. There was a light still burning there, and cheerful voices were heard. He opened the door; Alice, her daughter, and Coulson stood as if awaiting him. Hester's wet cloak hung on a chair before the fire; she had her hood on, for she and Coulson had been to the watch-night."

The story of *Sylvia's Lovers* is one of the later works, and should properly be mentioned after *Cranford* and after *North and South;* but, having begun to quote from it, I will still dwell for a minute upon this charming sea-picee—this Dutch picture, with its

lights, and tones, and delicate detail. Whitby itself is written down, painted in the bright atmosphere and varying colour. The fresh air blows, the boats pass and repass on the heaving tides, the fishermen in their big boots are all about, and the crowds and the Methodists of a century ago. We realise the busy turmoil, the abrupt downright thoroughness of the people, the stirring, and terrible, and most haunting facts of the early part of the nineteenth century. All is told, and yet told with what an instinctive gift and understanding of what to say and what to omit! The grim public events are brought in naturally, and weave into this remembrance of a wayward, loving girl, and the life's passion of her gloomy lover. Sylvia's home, her father, her mother, Kester the farm-hand, the very cows and their calves all live for us, as they must have lived for the writer. George du Maurier used to read the book with delight, and he loved the charming name of Sylvia. He used to speak of the story, I remember, with a sort of pride, as if it belonged to him, just as he himself belonged to Monkshaven, where he, too,

worked and played, and delighted to be with his wife, and with his family round about him. One day as we walked along the quays he pointed out the Fosters' shop, and the road along which Sylvia must have come tripping from the farm to buy her red duffle cloak.

Mrs. Gaskell put herself into her stories; her emotions, her amusements all poured out from a full heart, and she retold the experience of her own loyal work among the poor, of her playtime among the well-to-do. And as she knew more and more she told better and better what she had lived through. She told the story of those she had known, of those she had loved—so, at least, it seems to some readers, coming after long years and rereading more critically, perhaps, but with new admiration. Another fact about her is that she faced the many hard problems of her life's experience—faced them boldly, and set the example of writing to the point. It has been followed by how many with half her knowledge and insight, and without her generous purpose, taking grim subjects for

art's sake rather than for humanity's sake as she did.

Mary Barton and *Ruth* are problem stories, and their very passion and protest may have partly defeated their object; and yet what influence have they not had in the enduring convictions of the age!

Mary Barton was the first book Mrs. Gaskell published, and it made her name. She was writing to divert her own sorrow for the loss of her only boy; her pages were alive with emotion and with the truths she wanted to urge. As the wife of the Unitarian minister in Manchester, she had been long living among the troubles of his people, and she had tried to share them with him. Now out of her own grief she was telling the story of the sorrows she had known, and telling it with what force and pathos, with what fresh vigour and generous pleading! My own father, and Dickens and Carlyle and Kingsley, all the leading critics of those days recognised her great gift at once and with warm plaudits; who indeed could read the story of *Mary Barton* without admiration? There is

one special episode in the book, of a little boat pursuing the great ship into the open sea, which completely carries the imagination away. *Mary Barton* is a tract as well as a most moving and irresistible story. *Ruth* is a tract combined with a picture-book—too much of a tract perhaps to carry absolute conviction.

The pictures in the beginning of the story of *Ruth* must have been images of Mrs. Gaskell's own childhood, so brightly touched are they. Mrs. Gaskell was a young woman when she wrote. The landscapes are irradiate with the life and the dazzling colours of early prime—as in this picture from an old farm-house:

"In those days the house-place had been a cheerful room, full of life, with the passing to and fro of husband, child, and servants; with a great merry wood-fire crackling and blazing away every evening, and hardly let out in the very heat of summer; for with the thick stone walls, and the deep window-seats, and the drapery of vine-leaves and ivy, that room, with its flag-floor, seemed always to want the

sparkle and cheery warmth of a fire. But now the green shadows from without seemed to have become black in the uninhabited desolation. The oaken shovel-board, the heavy dresser, and the carved cupboards were now dull and damp, which were formerly polished up to the brightness of a looking-glass where the fire-blaze was for ever glinting; they only added to the oppressive gloom; the flag-floor was wet with heavy moisture. Ruth stood gazing into the room, seeing nothing of what was present. She saw a vision of former days—an evening in the days of her childhood; her father sitting in the 'master's corner' near the fire, sedately smoking his pipe while he dreamily watched his wife and child; her mother reading to her, as she sat on a little stool at her feet. It was gone—all gone into the land of shadows; but for the moment it seemed so present in the old room that Ruth believed her actual life to be the dream."

Here is another sketch from that same country place:

"Again they stood together at the top of a

steep ascent, 'the hill' of the hundred. At the summit there was a level space, sixty or seventy yards square, of unenclosed and broken ground, over which the golden bloom of the gorse cast a rich hue, while its delicious scent perfumed the fresh and nimble air. On one side of this common the ground sloped down to a clear bright pond in which were mirrored the rough sand-cliffs that rose abrupt on the opposite bank; hundreds of martins found a home there, and were now wheeling over the transparent water, and dipping in their wings in their evening sport. Indeed, all sorts of birds seemed to haunt the lonely pool; the water-wagtails were scattered around its margin, the linnets perched on the top-most sprays of the gorse-bushes, and other hidden warblers sang their vespers on the uneven ground beyond. . . . "

All this landscape is lived and fondly remembered, not noted by a passing traveller and studied from a literary point of view. The old country house, which I once saw, stands within a mile or two of Cranford, known to how many of us; of Hollingford, the

little straggling town where Mr. Gibson came and went, tending the sick and travelling on his beneficent rounds. That same town is also known as Knutsford by others. That the three places are one and the same none need ever doubt, and from this little northern stronghold of kindly wit and enterprise, sons and daughters have gone forth to take their place in the world, among whom many a trusted, well-known name belongs to Dr. Gibson's race and kin.

The old country house where Lord Clive as a boy, at the risk of his life, used to leap from one stone pier to another; where the grandchildren of the Holland family, and Mrs. Gaskell among them, have played before starting out into the world, is still standing. One of the Hollands, a son's son, so loved the old country where his grandfather had dwelt, that when, after long service in the House of Commons, he was raised to the House of Lords, he chose to be called by none other but the familiar name of Knutsford, a name which will be also ever associated with the goodness and noble beauty of her who shared it for so long.

IV

As one looks over the list of Mrs. Gaskell's books in the order in which they come, one cannot but see how they gain in maturity as they advance.

I can think of no other instance of one woman of mark doing so much honour and justice to another, as Mrs. Gaskell did when she wrote the history of Charlotte Brontë. It is true that memoirs, even dull ones, are the most fascinating of all reading. They are certainly cheering literature for those who chiefly remember and who can put a certain life into the dry pages which concern those they have known; but Mrs. Gaskell's life of Charlotte Brontë is a book not for those who remember only, but for the young who are learning still; for generations yet to be born. It is no mere list of events with dates and adjectives, but an actual aspect of life flashed and re-created there before us—we see the landscape, we breathe the atmosphere of weird dreams and of grim reality.

If Mrs. Gaskell trusted too much to the vivid

emphasis of a genius such as Charlotte Brontë's when she took some of her impressions for facts, and wrote of Branwell's hallucinations as though they had ever had a real existence, who will not feel for her and for the troubles that ensued? Charlotte Brontë had her passionate prejudices brought about by the very exclusiveness of her circumstances and character; but one likes to realise what happiness she must have found in her later days in the success of her work, in the encouragement of her publishers, and in Mrs. Gaskell's protecting element of common-sense and kindly friendship.

My space is almost at an end, and I feel as if I had only begun my say. Where is the just tribute to that fine novel of *North and South*, that book so well conceived, so bravely expressed, attacking great problems and speaking openly at a time when most people were still afraid to speak? Where is the critic's admiration for many of those shorter stories? One would like to dwell upon each in turn, and on *Cranford* and its beloved and amusing world, to be found again described, only with

greater depth and feeling, in *Wives and Daughters*, where we find the busy little town progressing still and making the most of its independent spirit.

Was there ever such a type of the wise country doctor as Mr. Gibson, such a charmer as Cynthia? A statue might be erected to Mrs. Gibson in the market-place of Hollingford, if all the people who have been amused by her were to subscribe. How edifying are her views when conversing with Osborne Hamley, and Cynthia is thanking him for some flowers! "Oh," says Osborne, "you must not thank me exclusively; I believe it was my thought, but Roger took all the trouble of it." "I consider the thought was everything," said Mrs. Gibson; "thought is spiritual, while action is merely material." "This fine sentence took the speaker herself by surprise." We also know her pensive speculations to Molly as to what would have happened if Molly's dear mother had lived and Mr. Kirkpatrick, her own dear first husband, also, and if they had married each other, and she herself had been Molly's mamma.

As for Molly Gibson, she is the dearest of heroines, a born lady, unconsciously noble and generous in every thought—it makes one the happier to know that Mollys exist, even in fiction, and one is grateful to those who can depict such characters from their own vivid perceptions and experience.

Mrs. Gaskell wrote not only to make people happier but also to teach the truth as she felt it. A critic, speaking of the novels of '48, has quoted Job Legh's saying out of *Mary Barton* as a text: "To my thinking them that is strong in any of God's gifts is meant to help the weak!" This same critic continues: "As the sonnet which had been as a lute for lovers became in Milton's hands a trumpet, so (in Mrs. Gaskell's time) the novel, which had once been (and was to be again) a toy, became a sword with which to fight the cause of the oppressed."

We must look to the people who can see to be our guides—not to the blind leading the blind, not to the fanciful, to the impatient, to the purblind pointing to arid places, to wastes and abysses, to impossible short cuts

which lead to sloughs of despond. Mrs. Gaskell could see the sloughs plainly enough, but she seemed instinctively to discover the stepping-stones, the clues out of the labyrinth, the merry, friendly, loving solutions which life presents; the happy possibilities still existing for each one of us if we did not always insist upon being our own tragedies.

The last pages of *Cousin Phillis* with the autumnal skies and the fragrant country horizons, contain true wisdom and philosophy. All the frenzies, all the dissertations and dissections of the modern school can express no more:

" 'Now, Phillis,' said old Betty, coming up to the sofa, 'we ha' done a' we can for you, and th' doctors has done a' they can for you, and I think the Lord has done a' He can for you, and more than you deserve, too, if you don't do something for yourself.' . . ."

Since writing this, I have come upon an old friend's criticism, printed at the end of *Wives and Daughters*, which I cannot but quote in conclusion:

" While you read Mrs. Gaskell's last three

books [he says], you feel yourself caught out of an abominable wicked world into one in which there is much weakness, many mistakes, sufferings long and bitter, but in which it is possible for people to live calm and wholesome lives; and what is more, you feel this is at least as real a world as the other. *The kindly spirit which thinks no ill looks out of her pages irradiate. . . .*"

NO. XII

CONCERNING TOURGUÉNIEFF

I

Sometimes opening a book is like opening a door and coming into the presence of a friend.

Friends are of different sorts. There are those whom we remember all our lives, who have loved us and been good to us; who have delighted us by their kindly fun and affection; they are *bon comme le pain*, as French people say, and bread is the staff of life. Then there are also the friends of imagination, who have given us help, fun, response, sympathy, if not affection, and in whom the inward grace is not lacking for us. Then again there are those whom we have beheld with our eyes, who have drawn us to them by their personality, whom

we have learnt to admire rightly, to know by degrees and in secret by a process unexplained; who have become types to us of what we most regard and hope to find in life.

A book lately published by M. Émile Haumont seems to have brought me once more into the presence of one of these friends, impersonal but very real, and recalled a great man whom I saw but three times in all.

My first remembrance of Ivan Tourguénieff is of a tall figure standing in the summer twilight in that familiar green drawing-room in Onslow Square where so many things happened which were beyond me, and where so many things were said which I did not follow. In those days I was more used to look at my father's guests than to speak to them or to understand who they were.

When I met Tourguénieff again, it was long years after. I had read the translations of his wonderful books and could realise him far more than on that first vague occasion. One of our associates, a delicate little lady, with a love for wise and interesting people, used to tell us about him and about the Viardots, for

whom she had a great enthusiasm, and when that time of trouble came to France which brought over so many distinguished refugees to London, these among them in particular were honoured guests in Mrs. Huth's drawing-rooms in Prince's Gate. The setting was suitable for such travellers; besides their welcoming hosts, the best of company, past and present, was there to receive them. Sir Thomas More's noble grim head, by Holbein, was over the chimney-piece; a lovely Gainsborough lady smiled from the wall, so did the original portrait of Madame de Sévigné, wearing the celebrated pearl necklace, with Madame de Grignan beside her—that charming pair—in all their grace to be admired.

An inner room, again, was lined with Mr. Huth's wondrous collection of Elizabethan literature—his Shakespeares and first editions—all in court dress, gilt-backed and dignified, and safe enclosed behind crystal doors. On this particular evening, which I remember so well, Madame Viardot was at the piano in a black dress, accompanying herself as she sang with that fire and grace which seemed so

specially to belong to her. It was some German ballad, and it seemed to be so little, so much, so immense, all in one. She sang—there was a sudden storm, there were children running down a village street in the music, we were all children as we listened—the passing storm was in the room. As the song finished, a thrill of admiration came in a rippling murmur from the listeners. It was one of those moments which count in life. Pauline Viardot's singing stirred up unknown perceptions and feelings in us all, her beautiful eyes were alight, she almost whispered the last words. Just then my glance fell upon Tourguénieff leaning against the door-post at the far end of the room, and as I looked I was struck, being short-sighted, by a certain resemblance to my father, which I tried to realise to myself. He was very tall, his hair was grey and abundant, his attitude was quiet and reposeful; I looked again and again while I pictured to myself the likeness. When Tourguénieff came up after the music, he spoke to us with great kindness, spoke of our father, and of having dined at our house, and he promised

kindly and willingly to come and call next day upon my sister and me in Onslow Gardens. I can remember that next day still; dull and dark, with a yellow mist in the air. All the afternoon I sat hoping and expecting that Tourguénieff might come, but I waited in vain. Two days later, we met him again at Mrs. Huth's, where we were all once more assembled. Mr. Tourguénieff came straight up to me at once. "I was so sorry that I could not come and see you," he said, "so very sorry, but I was prevented. Look at my thumbs!" and he held up both his hands with his palms outwards. I looked at his thumbs, but I could not understand. "See how small they are," he went on; "people with such little thumbs can never do what they intend to do, they always let themselves be prevented"; and he laughed so kindly that I felt as if his visit had been paid all the time and quite understood the validity of the excuse. He once did come into my house, but not till many years had passed. I am proud to think that he once sat down at my writing-table though he wrote but three words there.

This was in Young Street, by Kensington Square, on the occasion of his last visit to London. I had written to him at the suggestion of my sister-in-law, Mrs. Warre Cornish, to ask him if he would join a Windsor water-party, at which I think Tennyson was expected. No answer came to my letter, but one day when I returned home, my little country-maid said mysteriously that a "gentleman had called, a very tall gentleman with grey hair; he had asked for me, and then when he heard I was out, he said he should like to go in and write something, and he sat down at your table, ma'am, and wrote." Again the familiar description stirred me. On my table his card was lying, with a few words in his writing to say he was leaving England next day.

II

He had been at Windsor shortly before, when he went from London to call on Mrs. Oliphant. "He saw only one person," writes Mrs. Warre Cornish, "and sat with her in a

peaceful *tête-à-tête* in one of the sunny bow-windows of the house which bears her name to this day.[1] Mrs. Oliphant herself described the visit. 'She had never seen so contemplative a being, so big and so gentle at once.' She spoke of the great presence, of the leonine head set nobly on wide shoulders. 'Oh, a very great and gentle being, my dear, full of silent contemplation, immense and gentle,' she said. I seemed to see them sitting together. Mrs. Oliphant herself, with all her wonderful activity and performance, was a gentle, contemplative being, very shrewd and amusing with her intimate friends, but inclined to be shy with a stranger, and anyhow, readily quiet with any one who loved repose. I could picture the maternal Scotchwoman, with her dogs, as usual, curled up at her feet, and all the homelike setting of her sweet, self-limited existence, and opposite

[1] Oliphant House, in its green crescent, with the tall trees and rooks, is reached by an old-world, straggling, narrow street, which runs down from the castle to the winding river. Its very name, Peascod Street, is suggestive of any number of old taverns. It is said to have been known to Shakespeare, and certainly existed in the days when Mrs. Ford daily attended prayers in the parish church.

to her the great novelist, the sportsman from wide Russian horizons, and with those wider ones still of his own dreams."

There is yet another interesting account of Tourguénieff, when he received an honorary degree at Oxford. "He was entertained on the eve of the ceremony at Pembroke College; the well-known Master of the College being at that time Vice-Chancellor of the University, and it is from his hostess on that occasion, who did so much to make Oxford agreeable to the visitors of those days, that I have received a vivid picture of Tourguénieff. The presence of the tall Russian amongst the University guests, his whole personality, made a great and sudden impression even on those to whom he was but a name. He spoke readily and with great cordiality; his English was exceedingly good, and the amenity of the foreign guest was felt by all."

"The company that was assembled at the Vice-Chancellor's, the names of those who were to receive their degrees on the following day, and all the circumstances of that Commemoration have passed away from Mrs.

Evans's recollection. Only Tourguénieff remains, his look of power, and especially his wonderful eyes, which flashed as he spoke; these stay and cannot fade from the memory of any one who conversed with him."

He had friends in England he always turned to with affection. The Cross family at Weybridge and George Eliot were amongst these. He used to stay with Mr. Hall at Six-Mile Bottom, near Cambridge, and he liked the shooting there. He was an admirable shot. Mr. Cross speaks of the long days they used to spend out in the woods together. During one of these, Mr. Cross, who was then a very young man, asked Tourguénieff if he had ever written anything in French. Tourguénieff answered, "You have never written a book or you would not have asked that question; a man can only write his best in his own language. When I write in Russian I am free, I run without encumbrance; when I write in French I have restraint, I have boots on and advance more slowly; when I write in English I have *tight* boots on." But all the same he wrote and

spoke English admirably. He was once asked to write down his favourite pursuit. After a pause he wrote down, "Remorseless Laziness."

III

Any one reading the life of Ivan Tourguénieff, by Émile Haumont, must be painfully impressed by the story of his early bringing up.

In *Moumou*, so we are told, we may find the picture of his violent and despotic mother—elsewhere he describes her, from his childish recollections, silent and gloomy; his father elegant, haughty, icy. Strange to say, the children loved their parents, but they hardly saw them except, indeed, when presiding at executions and punishments, which were inflicted on every occasion.

One day Ivan was presented to the poet, Dmitrief. "I like your fables pretty well," says the child, "but I like Krylof's better."

"He was right," says the biographer who tells the story, "but not the less was he whipped for saying so." Another day he let an old lady see that he thought her very old and

broken, and again was he whipped; another time one of his parents' parasites (the house was full of them) accused him falsely—he knew nothing of it—he was whipped; in vain he disclaimed, every day he was to be whipped until he confessed; at night, in despair, he slipped out of his room determined to run away, and was discovered by his tutor, who took his part and obtained forgiveness for him. Later on, when Tourguénieff remembered his parents, it was their severity which first came to his mind, and no wonder! "Sermonised, beaten, deprived of dinner day after day; he could remember walking in the garden and swallowing with a sort of desperate pleasure the salt tears as they flowed from his eyes." The account of Varvara Petrovna, as given, is something terrifying. "Round about her fell punishments, exiles, deportations, humiliations of every sort—forced marriages, sudden separations, and blows which did not even spare her man of business, Poleakof."

Ivan suffered and learnt early to sympathise with others and to hate cruelty and injustice—was he not always kindness incarnate?

I have a picture of Tourguénieff taken towards the end of his life, sitting calm and grave, resting his hand on a stick. It was given me by the eminent Russian violinist, Mr. Brodsky, after a conversation during which he told me he had known Tourguénieff, and described how, as a young man just beginning his artist life in London, he had, to his great pleasure, received a card of invitation from Madame Viardot to a musical party. He arrived to the moment, before the family had come down, and he asked the servant at the door whether Mr. Tourguénieff was to be seen. He was told that he was ill in his room upstairs. Sending up his name, Mr. Brodsky learned that he would be received. Tourguénieff was in bed, in great pain, but, according to his wont, he welcomed his young protégé and signed him to sit down. Then he became interested by degrees in the account Mr. Brodsky gave of his work and his experiences. He threw himself into the story and began to speak of his own early days, so that he forgot his gout, which seemed suddenly to leave him. The time went on and on as the young man

sat listening to that charming talk; he could hear the music down below, never heeding anything but the fascinating intercourse with the master. As I myself, after long years, listened to the musician's description of that eventful meeting, I realised, as I have done again and again, the happy impression received by those who have come in contact with that large soul.

Perhaps no one has spoken or written of Tourguénieff with more charm and authority than Henry James, whose intercourse with him was a reality, not a passing impression.

An old friend, who did not herself care for conventions, told me that she went one day with her daughter to call upon Madame Viardot, to take leave of her just before she returned to Paris after that enforced residence in England in the winter of 1871. It was in the Wimpole Street region, and as they were reaching the door they saw a figure advancing, half hidden by countless white frills rising one above the other. It was no ghost, it was Tourguénieff carrying a clothes-basket full of freshly-ironed dresses, straight

from some foreign laundry. The house was in confusion, he explained, the frocks were absolutely needed by the ladies, and as no one else could go he himself had been to fetch them home—so much for a born gentleman's simplicity and natural dignity.

Henry James says of him: "He was natural to an extraordinary degree; I do not think I have ever seen his match in this respect, certainly not among people who bear, as he did at the same time, the stamp of the highest cultivation. . . . He had not in his mind a grain of prejudice. He was imaginative, speculative, anything but literal. . . . Our Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, moralistic, conventional standards were far away from him, and he judged things with a freedom and spontaneity in which I found a perpetual refreshment. His sense of beauty, his love of truth and right, were the foundations of his nature. . . ."

IV

How many voices have spoken of him with

a full heart! "The great *Muscovite* has been to see us!" wrote George Sand once from Nohant. "What a lovable and noble man! and how modest! He is adored here, and I set the example in adoring him."

Ivan Tourguénieff's own generous tribute to George Sand when she was attacked will not be forgotten: "It is eight years since I saw her for the first time," he wrote at the time of her death; "the enthusiastic admiration which she excited in me formerly was gone. I no longer adored her, but it was not possible to enter into her private life without becoming her adorer in another sense—a better one, perhaps; each one felt at once that he was in the presence of an infinitely rich and benevolent nature where all egotism had long been reduced to cinders by the inextinguishable flame of poetic enthusiasm and faith in the ideal, and besides all this there was a certain unconscious aureole, something high, free and heroic; believe me, George Sand is one of our saints."

Not very long ago some letters were published in the *Revue Hébdomadaire* written by

him to Madame Viardot, beginning in 1848, some three years after their first acquaintance. Tourguénieff, after travelling hither and thither about the world, had taken to literature as a profession, and his mother indignantly cast him off and ceased to send him money. Then it was that the Viardots lent him their country house (Courtavenel, in the Brie country), where he lived alone—melancholy, hard at work, contented, penniless. On one occasion he writes that he had bought some leverets with his last franc. He describes the trees, the stars, the thoughts which come to him. He writes in French. The ideas and the words respond to each other.[1]

Here is a minute to be lived over with Tourguénieff:

"Before going to bed every evening I take a short walk in the courtyard. Yesterday I stood upon the bridge and listened. These are the different sounds which I heard:

[1] The translation is difficult, and makes one realise how much more difficult translation from the Russian must be. Russian scholars tell one that it is just possible to render Tolstoi into another language; the subtle charm and beauty of Tourguénieff's style cannot be conveyed.

"The sound of the rush of the blood in my ears and in my breath.

"The shivering, the continual whispering of the leaves, the quizz of the grasshoppers—there were four of them in the trees of the courtyard.

"The fish rose to the surface of the water, making a soft noise which was like a kiss.

"From time to time a drop fell with a little silvery sound.

"A branch snapped. . . . Who had broken it? That dull sound; is it the fall of steps upon the road? is it a distant voice?

"And then, suddenly, the shrill soprano of a gnat comes and rings in one's ear."

Here is another picture, that of the poplar trees at Courtavenel in the summer-time. It is like reading a Corot:

"All these days the weather has been very fine. But there has been a great wind which from time to time has blown very hard and persistently.

"The stir which it made in the leaves suited the poplar trees very well. They sparkled bravely in the sunshine. I must tell you one

thing I have observed, that is, that a motionless poplar looks very dull and very stupid (*écolier et très bête*), unless, indeed, it should be in the evening, when the leaves look almost black against the rose-depths of the sky. In that case everything must keep hushed; only the leaves at the very summit have permission to stir a little.

"By the way, I have been amusing myself by discovering trees in the neighbourhood which have their own physiognomy and individuality . . . there is the horse-chestnut in the countyard which I have christened *Hermann:* I am looking for his *Dorothea;* there is a birch at Maisonfleur which is very like a *Gretchen;* an oak has been baptised *Homer;* there is an elm which is an *amiable ne'er do weel,* and another *prim virtue.*"

At another time he writes from Paris to Madame Viardot, who was travelling about in Germany during these months, winning great victories on the stage wherever she went: "All this week I have scarcely left the house; I have worked tremendously. Never did ideas come to me so abundantly; they came by

dozens. I reminded myself of a poor devil of an innkeeper in a little town who suddenly finds himself overwhelmed by an avalanche of guests. He ends by losing his head, and no longer knows where to place his company."

One more picture comes from Paris; it is impossible to translate the charming melodious French.

"*September 20th.*

"It has been splendid weather for the last two or three days. I take long walks in the Tuileries before my dinner; I watch a crowd of children there at play; all charming as little loves and all so prettily dressed; their grave, infantile caresses, their little pink cheeks freshened by the first touch of winter, the placid, kindly look of the nurses, the beautiful red sun beyond the great horse-chestnuts, the statues, the sleeping waters; the grand, sombre-grey colour of the Tuileries—all this pleases me infinitely, rests and refreshes me after a morning's work. I muse—not vaguely German fashion—at what I am doing, at what I have got to do."

Soon after, whilst still leading this solitary

life, his mother's serious illness called him back to Russia.

To Monsieur Viardot he wrote before he started in June, 1850:

"Is not the true home there where one has found the most affection, and where the heart and the spirit feel most at ease?—there is no place upon earth that I love as well as Courtavenel. You have in me, dear Viardot, a true and unchanging friend. Be happy—*soyez heureux*—I wish you all that there is of good in this world. We shall meet again one day, a happy day for me, which will amply repay me for all the sadnesses which await me."

There are curious stories told of the autocratic old lady's end; as she lay on her deathbed, she tried to despoil her children; she had given orders for forced sales, for houses and farms to be burned to the ground. Her mind must have been wandering; happily she died before further harm was wrought. Tourguénieff divided the inheritance with his brother, leaving him the larger share of the property; he kept Sparskoë for himself, the familiar

house to which he returned year after year until his death, accompanied by companions and friends. One of the letters to Madame Viardot, dated September, 1850, is written in happy and good spirits; it is full of emotion:

"Good-morning, dear, good, noble, excellent friend. Good-morning, you who are that which is best in the world. Give me your dear hands that I may kiss them. That will do me good and will put me into good humour. There! That is done. Now we are going to talk. I have to tell you that you are an angel of goodness and that your letters have made me the happiest of men. If you knew what it is to have a friend's hand which seeks you from so far to place itself gently upon you! The gratitude which one feels reaches to adoration. I am greatly in need of affection at this moment, so lonely am I here, therefore I cannot tell you how much I love those I love and who have some affection for me."

Tourguénieff was writing fully to Flaubert in 1876; he was translating Flaubert's book, *La Legende de Saint Julien l'Hospitalier.* We

know how constant his efforts were to help his friends and to make them known to the Russian public. Tourguénieff never wrote better than at this time, although, as he says in a letter to Flaubert, he is writing from his Pathmos, "Triste comme un bonnet de nuit." "Have you remarked," he continues, "that this is the moment which one generally chooses to write to one's best friends?" "*Je crains en general les dames qui traduisent.*" he says; but all the same I cannot help translating his charming sentences. He tells of the green of his garden, scattered with little dead leaves, which reminds him vaguely of the dead bodies of little children, "sycamores give a thin and miserable shadow which is sad to see; besides all this, my brother, who was to have waited for me to settle very important affairs for me, has gone off to Karlsbad, and I think I am going to have the gout; also I am convinced that my manager is robbing me, and that I cannot get rid of him. This is the situation. The death of Madame Sand has given me great sorrow. I know that you went to Nohant for the funeral; and I, who

wanted to send a telegram in the name of the Russian public, I was held back by a sort of ridiculous modesty, by the fear of criticism of stupid things. . . . Poor dear Madame Sand, she loved us both, and you most of all. What a heart of gold was hers, what an absence of all false and unworthy sentiment; what a brave man she was, and what a good woman!

. . . . . .

"I cannot give you any idea of the silence of this place—not a neighbour for 20 kilometres, everything languishing from inaction. The house is miserable, but not too hot, and the furniture is good. I have an admirable writing-table, and a double armchair with a cane bottom. The sofa is dangerous: one goes to sleep as soon as one lies down upon it. I shall try to avoid the sofa. I shall begin by finishing *St. Julien.*

"Standing in a corner of the room there is an old Byzantine image, very black, framed in silver, nothing but an immense face, rigid, lugubrious; it worries me, but I cannot have it removed—my servant would take me for a

pagan, and this is not a thing to risk here. Write me two words more cheerful than these."

In his next letter to Flaubert he is still writing of Madame Sand: "Yes, Madame Sand's life was a full one, and yet in speaking of her one says poor Madame Sand. . . . I also remember the eyes of little Aurore; they are wonderful for depth and for goodness, and they are like those of her grandmother. It seems that Zola has written a long article of Madame Sand in the *Revue Russe;* the article is fine but a little hard, I am told. Zola cannot judge Madame S. in a complete way, there is too much distance between them. You are at work at Croisset; well, I am going to surprise you, I have never worked so well as since I was here. I spend whole nights bending over my desk; the illusion has seized me again that one can say what one means . . . and remember with all this I am overwhelmed with business, with money affairs, with farm accounts . . . but *St. Julien* suffers from this exuberance of activity. My deuce of a novel (*Terres Vierges*) has seized

me absolutely; but do not be uneasy, the translation of *St. Julien* will appear. . . .

"You want to know the look of my habitation: it is very ugly; it is a house of wood, very old, built with planks painted in lilac distemper; there is a verandah in front covered with climbing ivy. The roofs are of iron, and covered green; the top is uninhabitable, and the windows are nailed up. This house is all that remains of a vast habitation which was burnt in 1870.

"Last night, with your letter in my pocket, I was sitting in the front of my verandah; before me were some sixty countrywomen, almost all dressed in red and very ugly, one alone excepted, a bride of sixteen, who resembled in a wonderful way the Virgin of San Sisto at Dresden; they were dancing like bears, and singing with very harsh and hard voices, but in good tune; it was a little *fête* they had begged me to organise; this was indeed very easy—two pails of *eau de vie*, cakes, and nuts, and that was all. As they got excited I watched them, and felt horribly sad; the little Virgin of San Sisto is called

Marie, as she ought to be. Enough, I will write to you again before leaving this; in the meanwhile I embrace you.—Your old

"Ivan Tourguénieff.

"*P. S.*—The country here strikes me as pale, as well as the sky, the verdure, the earth; but it is a warm and golden paleness; it would be only pretty if it were not for the great lines, the great uniform spaces which add grandeur to it all."

In August he was back at Bougival again. He had finished *Terres Vierges:* "I must now copy it out," he says, "and it must be ready in two months, which will not be easy. You know what it is to copy out; there are pages of which not a single line remains."

One cannot wonder after reading Tourguénieff's account of *Spasskoïoé* that he complains of other people's descriptions. He has been reading Renan's *Souvenirs d'Enfance.* He says: "His article is personally interesting, but what a want of colour and of life: I see nothing, neither Brittany, nor all the saints,

nor his mother, nor his little girls, nor himself. . . ."

There is one characteristic little episode dated 17th August, 1877:

"Caen, Grand Hôtel de la Place Royale.

"Caen, why Caen? will you say, my dear vieux [Flaubert]. What the devil does Caen mean? This is the explanation: the ladies of the Viardot family are to spend a fortnight by the sea, either at Luc, or Saint Aubain, and they have sent me in advance to find lodgings. I have brought your letter with me."

For a time Tourguénieff could continue his friendly, kindly offices for those he loved, then the clouds gathered and his health failed him utterly. It was six years after this that Madame Viardot wrote the epilogue of their long friendship: Tourguénieff died on September 3, 1883.

"He no longer suffered; for two days he had lost consciousness, his life was slowly

passing away," she wrote. "We were all round about him . . . he became again as beautiful as he had ever been. The second day after his death his habitual look of benevolence was there; one could expect to see him smile."

And indeed the smile of those who have belonged to the noble army of the good and great on earth remains long after they are gone. Is it Chaucer or Shakespeare, is it Mozart, or do nearer and dearer beams come before our eyes, lighting up the way? Can we not each put our own name to that which has made our happiness?

No. XIII

CONCERNING THOMAS BEWICK

Written from a Poultry Farm

Some of us went flying north one summer morning, leaving London behind us, and travelling towards the clear mountain air and wide-spreading moors. At sunset we found ourselves in an old house in Northumberland, which was standing firm and square upon the slope of a hill—"Baal's Hill," where Druids had once sacrificed to those terrible gods of theirs, but whence victims and priests and gods and midnight rites have all alike been swept away by time, that mightiest of broomsticks. All is at peace and silent on Baal's Hill now at midnight, except for the distant cries of birds and sleepy animals, and of the owls that whistle and pipe through the dark

hours; perhaps as you lie sleeping in the earliest dawn you may be awakened by the whizzing sound of pigeons cleaving the air, after the owls have ceased to hoot. Then the turkey poults begin to call from the shrubberies across the lawn, and a matutinal burst follows from the exultant poultry-yard at the back of the old house, with far-away answering calls in the adjacent farm, or from the ducks on the island on the lake. If you are roused from your bed and look out through the half-open shutters of the windows you may see the lawn softly alight in the early morning rays, and the little Dandy Dinmont wildly careering after the low-flying swallows. By the time you come downstairs the sun has risen above the ash-trees, the whole place is cheerful with nine o'clock sunshine, and with cluckings and flappings and loud ringing notes, along with the pigeons' soft cooing, and the hoarse crow of the roosters, and the pipings and chatterings of the rest of the colony. Hark to the upraised voices of the waddling fat ducks as they surround the meal pans in the poultry-yard; they are haranguing the

poor little lame wild duck who is pecked by all the rest for attempting to take his share in the feast of life; then mark the floundering fussified turkey poults making confusion as they go, and upsetting the pan they want to monopolise; and again, what is this mysterious procession advancing from some distant land, a procession of wise birds from the East, speckled with silver, robed in soft Oriental feathers, dignified, inscrutable on noiseless orange toes, passing in quiet decorum through the crowding scene!

It was here in this hospitable northern home-farm, where Socrates himself might have found intelligent disciples, as well as cocks without number to sacrifice to Æsculapius, where Fairy Blackstick most certainly would have loved to linger, that a friend put Mr. Austin Dobson's delightful book about Thomas Bewick and his pupils into our hands; and as we read and looked around on Bewick's country and the sights he loved, the book of his work seemed to be open everywhere. The skies, the trees, the undulating lines of the hills and wolds, all were repeated on the recording pages. The

story so admirably told sent us later on to look for Bewick's own memoir, and for the original drawings, at Newcastle, where they hang in the museum.

Few places are to be found in all the rest of England so striking and varied in aspect as Bewick's native county. The energy of London itself seems to throb in Newcastle amid its smoke, in its clash of eager politics, in its ringing labouring streets, while beyond the city spreads the long sea-coast with its old castles and fastnesses, and the fishing-ports, with their quaint wynds and gables, guarded by certain white-winged legions that go flying and flashing out to sea from the shores and rocks where they have built their nests. Further inland lie the wide moors that divide England from Scotland, and the sturdy farms and stone cottages, the strong towers and pigeon-cotes that have for centuries defied the assaults of the foe, be he wrapped in storm or in tartan. Fragrant clover fields scent the air, crossed by the broad high-roads which the Romans first made, and which run by the fields and coppices whence the

russet game-birds start at the sound of footsteps.

The Romans no longer come marching along the roads, but an army of tramps flying from work still passes continually; and along with the tramps come the Northumbrians themselves, with droves of cattle, and with great hay-carts loaded and guarded by their stately waggoners. Beyond the track is that sense of space, of fresh winds which Bewick loved, and which one seems to find again as one looks at his designs.

To drive along the crowding streets and to step into Bewick's gallery in the Natural History Museum in Newcastle, is like stepping suddenly out of noise and smoke and rattle into some green grove where the birds are singing. It is a fairy exhibition alive with grace and meaning. The originals of his engravings hang all round the gallery in delicate studies and suggestions, and they certainly have a special charm which seems unattainable in their reproduction, although the intention and sentiment happily are reproduced in his delightful books. The sketches

themselves are indescribably delicate and finely felt; he takes a nib dipped in colour, a fine hair-brush, a tiny scrap of paper, and behold a whole scene of sylvan life rises up, a real note is striking in the great concert of nature into which the designer now calls us. A sense of time, of space, surrounds the dramas and the tragedies which he suggests with his apparently slight details. Sticks, chips, nests, scraps of farmyard ways, commonplace humble things, a whole philosophy is written down in these simple hieroglyphics. There lies the dog drowned, his four legs bound together by a rope; the magpies come up, with bright careful eyes; overhead is the flight of the indifferent birds, and in the wet mud are the marks of the retreating footsteps of the man who did the deed. Is not this tragedy? It is like the knocking at the door in *Macbeth*.

Then, again, for comedy, who will not recognise the humorous truth of the little picture in which the traveller is trying to hoist the heavy sack upon his back before he starts once more upon tramp, while a little demon with horns and tail is mischievously pinning

down the load! The moon is rising beyond the five-barred gate, and lighting up the scene —the rocks and the silvering hedges; perhaps Bewick, with the rest of us, felt his load heavy at times, but he was of that brave and uncomplaining sort that plods on steadily and with single purpose.

The keeper of the museum showed us an interesting series of sketches from a capercailzie, with a little history belonging to it. The stuffed bird stood as stuffed birds do, impaled, with straw for blood, and sticks for bones, and Bewick drawing it reproduced a stuffed capercailzie filled with straw, and toppling on its perch. Discontented with this, he set to work all over again; and lo! the second bird was a capercailzie so majestic and dignified and fiery of aspect that it would seem to belong to the eagles rather than to its humbler station in life. Then Bewick sets to work again as a true man should do, and this time the living bird itself is there upon the page, neither more nor less spirited than a capercailzie should be. But this is the very essence of a True Gift, the natural apprehension which

finds life and expression where others only see the straws.

The artist's erasures, which prove his infinite care and pains, are no less interesting in some ways than the actual drawings in this charming exhibition, so varied, so widely reaching. There is a narrow little scrap of paper about three inches long on which no less than eight dogs in a chain are depicted, each different in type and character. As for plovers and choughs, eider ducks and spoonbills, kites (lame and otherwise), it is a garden of Eden for birds of different kinds, with Northumberland always and everywhere for a background; whether the villagers are dancing to the music of the three blind fiddlers, or the ships sailing by on the sea, or horses galloping across the fields, or the gallows standing by the roadside, it is always Northumberland round about. One of the most touching of the pictures is called *Waiting for Death*. It was left unfinished by Bewick when he died. The old white horse stands by the blasted tree, the house is falling to the ground; a sigh and a last farewell seem to

reach you as you look not unmoved. Another picture is also to be seen, one of the last he ever drew, where all is at peace, and the parting over. It represents a tranquil country scene; the funeral passing down the sloping field to the ferry, where the boat is waiting to carry this loyal knight to his last rest in Ovingham churchyard.

It is said that Bewick's family did not like the portrait of Bewick by Ramsay, which forms the frontispiece to Mr. Austin Dobson's book. The drawing represents a vigorous old man, with a face full of imagination and thought; the eyes have that outlooking expression which is so characteristic of the artistic temper. He is dressed in a swallow-tailed coat and knee-breeches; he leans upon his stick, and seems watching the distant line of the hills. There is another most charming portrait in Bewick's own gallery at Newcastle, painted by Goods. This one represents an old man sitting in a chair, and dressed in grey breeches with shoes and woollen stockings, and with the time-honoured frill to his shirt which also belonged to Sir Joshua and to the

Duke of Wellington. The earnest, bland, strong face seems absolutely characteristic of this true artist, whose genius was so open to receive, so delicate to describe its impressions. Bewick, besides his love for nature and his power to depict it, possessed that delightful play of mind which some call humour, and which is assuredly the characteristic of true sympathy. I write advisedly, for humour seems to me, interest combined with affection and truthful criticism, as opposed to that interest without light or shade which is apt to grow monotonous in its unvarying note of reverence and blind reiteration, or painful in its modern attitude of shrug and sarcastic laughter.

Some of us may remember how Frank was cured of playing with his fingers, and how at last he stood opposite to his father and held his hands perfectly still. "The servant, who was bringing some things of his out of the chair in which M. Edgeworth came, was desired to give Frank a book which was in the front pocket of the chair and which was a copy of Bewick's quadrupeds. In this

book Frank's practical father immediately writes a suitable inscription. 'This book given to Frank, October 27th, 1798, by his father, as a mark of approbation for his having at six years old cured himself of a foolish habit.'"

Bewick's memoirs, which are less known than they deserve to be, are ingenuous and most convincing, set to the accompaniment of shrewd and delightful drawings. Bewick was a son of the soil if ever there was one, and Northumberland must seem to many of us a more beautiful place when we think of his happy life-long pilgrimage among its moors, of his patient wanderings in winter time and summer time, of his love for it all. His serene and observant eyes absorbed the light from the land while he listened to the voices everywhere; from the ditches and hedges, from the rustling trees, from the rushing streams. Above all he realised the elements of life in still life, and of humanity in that natural life in which he delighted. He describes himself in his memoirs when quite a little child, covering the gravestones and the floor of the church-

porch with a bit of chalk, and "figuring" whatever he had seen. At that time he had never heard of the word drawing, and the only paintings he knew were those of the king's arms in the church or the signs of the public-houses in Ovingham, the Black Bull, the White Horse, the Salmon, and the Hounds and Hare. "I always thought," he said, "I could make a far better hunting-scene than the latter; the others were beyond my hand." Then he describes how a friend in compassion furnished him with paper: "Pen and ink, and the juice of the brambleberry, made a grand change. Of patterns and drawings I had none; the beasts and birds which enlivened the beautiful scenery of woods and wilds surrounding my native hamlet, furnished me with an endless supply of subjects.

"I now, in the estimation of my rustic neighbours," he continues, "became an eminent painter. . . ."

His admiring neighbours are to be numbered by thousands to-day; and which of us that knows his drawings is not his neighbour? His touch when he is at his best is so vigorous, so

certain, that seeing his work brings back some of the actual delight of the places themselves, now revisited in the companionship of this most conscientious and ardent spirit. Bewick, as I have said, possesses that natural apprehension which is the very essence of genius. He draws a falling leaf, a thumb-mark; he draws the claw of a bird, the fluffy feather dropped in its sudden flight; and each is perfect in its own degree. Bewick can draw a summer's day; we may see the painter himself standing in the very heart of June slaking his thirst at the fountain; he can draw snow and a wintry scene in all its silence and frozen beauty. He can draw the song of a bird, or the howls of the dog that has just upset the stew-pot; he can even draw abstract sensations, such as rest, stillness, terror, content. What human being could look without delight at one of those footpieces in which the cows are drinking as they stand in the river among the flying swallows and the magpies?

The story of Bewick's boyhood is told by himself in detail. "Now," as Mr. Dobson says, "he is taming a runaway horse by riding

it barebacked over the sykes and burns; now frightening oxen into the river for the pleasure of hearing the 'delightful dash'; now scampering off naked over the fells with his companions in imitation of the savages in *Robinson Crusoe*." Mr. Dobson also quotes from the lovely passage in which Bewick describes how from his earliest childhood by the little window at his bed-head he had listened to the flooded burn, or watched from the byre-door the rarer birds, the woodcocks, the snipes, the redwings, the fieldfares, which in winter made their unwonted appearance in the frozen landscape. When he was fourteen he was sent from Ovingham to Newcastle to learn engraving from Mr. Ralph Beilby. He liked his master, he liked the business: "But to part from the country and to leave all its beauties behind me with which I had been all my life charmed in an extreme degree—and in a way I cannot describe—I can only say my heart was like to break, and as we passed along I inwardly bade farewell to the whining wilds, to Mickly bank, and to the Stobcross hill." Then he settles down to

the assiduous, laborious life. Bewick himself enumerates the works he was employed upon. Pipe-moulds, bottle-moulds, brass clock-faces, coffin-plates, stamps, seals, bill-heads and cyphers, and crests for silversmiths. In the Newcastle Museum are some of the shop-signs and stamps designed by him, advertisements of millinery, of "Bird's fashionable drapery," engraved as on an ornament to head the bills.

Bewick once came away to London whither his fame had preceded him, and where friends and abundant orders for work were in waiting. For a few months he paced the Strand and its adjacent streets on his way to and from his work; he spent his evenings in Brook Street, where instead of asking for bread and milk he "now learnt to call for a pint of porter," elsewhere he describes his first draught of brandy and water. He frequented Westminster Abbey, but he said that nothing he found in London could ever compensate for the absence of peace, of natural space, and old associations, and that he had rather herd sheep at five shillings a week than earn guineas

and fame in this world of extremes. "The country of my old friends, the manners of the people of that day, the scenery of Tyneside, seemed altogether to form a paradise for me, and I longed to see it again."

He turned wistfully to the something beyond; to the point where spirit and where matter meet; the personal vibration between man and nature, which is the soul of immaterial things. Where that point of meeting exists is different for every one of us, and each living soul in turn has to try to apprehend it for itself.

As he strode along the busy London streets, Bewick knew that his heart was in the north, far away by Tyneside among his early haunts, listening with delight to the murmuring of the flooded burn which passed his father's house, remembering the times when he would leap from bed to watch the water's varying aspects, or follow the sheep through the wreaths of snow as they sought shelter from the drifts on the fells "under the low braes overhung with whins."

So he went back to his own home and his own people, and spent the remainder of his honourable faithful life among them.

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Ritchie, ~~Lady~~
Blackstick papers.